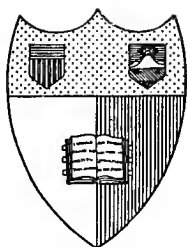


# THE GLORY SEEKERS

THE ROMANCE OF WOULD-BE  
FOUNDERS OF EMPIRE IN THE  
EARLY DAYS OF THE SOUTHWEST



WILLIAM HORACE BROWN



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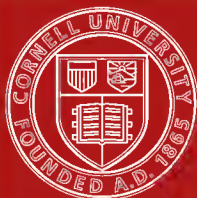
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# THE GLORY SEEKERS

THE ROMANCE OF WOULD-BE FOUNDERS OF EMPIRE  
IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST







AARON BURR  
*American conspirator*

# THE GLORY SEEKERS

THE ROMANCE OF WOULD-BE FOUNDERS  
OF EMPIRE IN THE EARLY DAYS OF  
THE GREAT SOUTHWEST

BY  
WILLIAM HORACE BROWN

WITH SIXTEEN PORTRAITS AND SIXTEEN  
ILLUSTRATIVE INITIALS



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1906

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## FOREWORD

OVER the scenes of the exploits traced in these pages the sun of glory is now high risen. The wilderness has been transformed into proud and populous States. Men whose daring and ambition outweighed their sense of justice prevised in early days the quick-dawning greatness of the land. Eager for possession, while yet it was a wilderness, their predatory enterprises smacked of mediæval violence. Usually of desperate spirit, they staked their lives on the venture, to

“—win their way with falchion’s force,  
Or pave the path with many a corse.”

Sheep now browse over thousands of unmarked graves of adventurers who invaded Spanish territory bent on conquest; for in almost every raid they paid the mortal penalty of their rashness, and their doom in some degree absolved their transgression.

Yet not all of those reckless gamesters were rude, unschooled desperadoes. Among them are numbered youths of education and respectable connections, whose brief lives lend to the annals the glamor of wild romance. Their

deeds are hardly registered on the sedate pages of national history, although for decades they inspired emulation throughout the South and the West. As time recedes, the incidents of those bold days will diminish in the historical perspective, yet they will continue for generations to furnish themes for story and drama. Those garnered in this volume form a particular group.

W. H. B.

## NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

**A**S an index to the sources from which these chapters were mainly drawn, and also as an acknowledgment of his obligation to them, the writer gives the following authorities, with the feeling that the first three in the list are entitled to special recognition: Gayarré's "History of Louisiana," Yoakum's "History of Texas," Pickett's "History of Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi," Humphrey Marshall's "History of Kentucky," Monette's "History of the Valley of the Mississippi," Foote's "Texas and the Texans," J. H. Brown's, Holley's, and Thrall's histories of Texas, Ramsey's "Annals of Tennessee," Haywood's "History of Tennessee," Martin's "History of Louisiana," Thomas Marshall Green's "Spanish Conspiracies," Goodspeed's "The Province and the States," William Jay's "The Federal Government and Slavery," Giddings's "Florida Exiles," Kendall's "Santa Fé Expedition," H. H. Bancroft's "North Mexican States and Texas," Vol. II. The principal histories of the United States were also frequently consulted.



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# THE GLORY SEEKERS

## CHAPTER I

*The Southwest after the War of Independence—Adventurers and Discontents—Spanish Obstructions—Wilkinson's Treasonable Enterprise—A Spaniard's Prophecy.*



THIS is mainly the story of men who, standing on the rugged confines of civilization in America at an early period of our national life, sought distinction by attempting to hitch their wagons to the star of empire.

In the tales of early American adventure we encounter some picturesque characters, and frequently have fairly to gasp for breath at the audacity of their schemes. Especially is this true of those daring spirits who operated in the Southwest, that grand theatre of historic melodrama,—of perilous exploits, projects of conquest, and

dreams of sovereignty. The opportunities that unfolded to their visions embraced the subjection of territory extending anywhere from the Alleghany mountains to Yucatan. For the most part they probably were limited to founding a republic or an empire in the vast regions between the Lower Mississippi and the Rio Grande rivers. This extensive region seems to have excited more fanciful pictures of pomp and power in the minds of imaginative glory seekers than any other part of the American continent. During the period of three or four decades following the War of Independence, all paths of exploitation appear to have led toward this broad domain. That long war being at an end, left many men inured to military life, and many disappointed politicians, with limited opportunities for the exercise of their singular talents. Naturally enough, thousands of them pushed to the frontiers. To the west were desert and mountain wilderness, to the northwest an unexplored and supposedly barren region peopled only with savages. But beyond Louisiana and the steppes of Texas was a civilized nation numbering many millions of people.

The strained political conditions of our country during that era and the chaotic state of affairs in Mexico combined to incite questionable enterprises. The Mexicans were struggling fitfully to shake off the oppressive rule of Spain, encouraged by the revolutionary success of their northern neighbors, but showing neither their strength

nor singleness of purpose. It seemed to be the conviction of all that the vast area of woodland and prairie, fertile and inviting, lying between the territories of the United States and the Mexican frontier was destined to become at an early day prosperous and rich. Texas, a Mexican province, was practically uninhabited and neglected. All it required was to open the gateways, take possession, and invite a flood of immigrants from Europe, from the Atlantic States, from everywhere. That done, and a power established, it would be easy to seize Mexico, to liberate the people from Spanish tyranny, and to incorporate the whole in one grand empire. And if the United States should by that time be having trouble in steering its ship of state,— well, the grand empire might then expand to the eastward.

Just when and how these magnificent schemes had their inception, is debatable. They were not original with Aaron Burr, although he is about the only one who, in this generation, is remembered by any but careful students of history as having entertained them ; nor was he the last who attempted to bring them to a realization. James Wilkinson had been plotting for years before Burr floated his puny rafts down to the Mississippi, but neither was he the first. The Southwest Territory, before the erection of the States of Kentucky and Tennessee, teemed with rugged fellows who, for one cause or another, had designs on Spanish possessions. They had marked the Floridas

and Louisiana for their own. And they did not halt at that. They schemed also for the dismemberment of the Union, with the view of incorporating its States and Territories bordering on the Mississippi with provinces to be wrested from Spain, and the forming of an independent government. The leading residents of that part of the Union engaged in such treason almost before the Constitution was adopted. They plotted with and against the Spanish provincial governors. The latter knew they were the mark for constant intrigues, and it would have been quite unlike them if they had not reciprocated such compliments.

Indeed, the ramifications of the various intrigues during the last years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth were so extensive that an essay to portray the circumstances which led to the freebooters' expeditions in the Southwest would be futile without giving special attention to them. To appreciate the predatory movements of those gentlemen of the high hand it is necessary to outline in passing the history of Spanish and American relations then existing.

While we find romances, there are also ugly spots disclosed in those early American annals. It is just as well to remind ourselves occasionally of those stains, lest we forget, in our tendency to idealize indiscriminately the lives of our forbears, that justice and patriotism were not always the prompters of their actions. State historians, particularly

of the section now considered, have sinned constantly in such indiscriminate praise. They have sinned both by omission and commission. Some crimes they have studiously concealed, while others they have sugar-coated and passed along to posterity as virtuous actions.

The American people, as a people, can well afford to be candid in their history. It is but justice to those of our forefathers who were steadfast in loyalty to remember that there were some others who lapsed. It has come about that in the minds of the people two names stand for all there ever was, in the formative period of our nation, of disloyalty to the Union. Arnold and Burr are the only renegades to the sacred cause of a free and united country, and they are made to suffer vicariously for the sins of thousands. It is just as well to uncover some of the smaller traitors of those days—it is pertinent to the stories of our adventurers.

Late in 1784 there appeared in Kentucky a young man of exceptionally plausible manners and agreeable presence. There is no fiction about this. The stranger was a forceful embodiment of self-assertion, self-possession, and self-seeking. He was about twenty-eight, of excellent physique, not tall, but strongly built, with mobile and almost handsome features. Add to these attractions a high military title, and who can wonder that he created a great deal of interest among the people of Lexington, with whom he announced that he had come to cast his fortunes? He

was James Wilkinson, some six years before colonel and brevet-brigadier general in the American Army of the Revolution. He came now from Philadelphia, where for some time he had been connected with commercial concerns; and it was as the representative of such an association, it was understood, that he emigrated to the frontier.

Before following his career, let us take a glimpse at his past. Born in Maryland, he early began the study of medicine. The war with the mother country breaking out he was one of the first to enlist as a private; served at the siege of Boston, and immediately began to receive commissions. He was soon a brigade-major under St. Clair, and happened to be present in the house where General Charles Lee was captured. The British dragoons who purloined that military fakir overlooked Wilkinson, who straightway became an adjutant on the staff of General Gates with the rank of colonel. He was in at the killing at Saratoga, and was present in the most showy uniform of the Continentals at the surrender of Burgoyne. It may have been because of his exceptional uniform that Gates selected him as official messenger to carry his report of the victory to the Congress, which was then sitting at Yorktown.

Wilkinson was at that date hardly twenty-one, but precocious — rather in audacity, it is hinted, than in military skill. But whatever the reason, he was at that period a favorite with General Gates. He set out for Yorktown

in a showy manner, having a military guard. It would naturally be supposed that he made an eager and hurried trip with such glorious news for the nation's council. Not so. He took more than dignified leisure, stopped long at the inns, posed as a hero of the victory to admiring yokels in barrooms, received their applause, and repeated the entertainment at the next tavern.

At length, and still more leisurely, he arrived at Yorktown, having been on the road nearly a month. But even then he did not report his arrival for two days. The uniform and accoutrements had become tarnished by the journey, and he took that time to preen himself up to his normal glitter, and to prepare a grandiloquent oration with which to deliver his message. Finally he presented himself before the venerables, who had long before received the news through the weekly papers. They listened with some impatience to his bumptious rhetoric; after which he hung around, hoping they would reward him for having arrived with the report at all. But he had his friends, and one of them suggested the propriety of voting him a sword, whereupon a disgusted old Scotch member exclaimed :

“I think ye'd better gie the lad a pair o' spurs!”

While the tardy spur-heel was grumbling at the ingratitude of Congress, his friends were busy. He must have been a good lobbyist, for before he left he was brevetted a brigadier. Soon after that he got involved in the

Conway cabal by talking loosely, for which he pleaded excuse by declaring it was during a convivial hour. Gates now turned upon and denounced him, but Wilkinson maintained, as he ever did when caught in a questionable mix, that he worshipped honor as the jewel of his soul. He and the general talked pistols behind the meeting-house at eight o'clock, but came to an understanding and merely took coffee. Wilkinson then was appointed secretary to the Board of War, but quarrelled again with Gates, its president, whom he accused of treachery in the Conway affair, and resigned after serving only a few days. Just prior to this he resigned his newly-acquired commission of brevet-brigadier, because all the forty-seven colonels of the army, who were older than he, raised such a protest at the favoritism of it.

There was something peculiar about those two resignations which left the young warrior out of the service. That they were altogether voluntary can hardly be credited. "It was a retirement," says Irving, "which we apprehend he richly merited, and we doubt whether his country would have been the loser had he been left to enjoy it for the remainder of his days." But Wilkinson did not propose to quit a loser. He went to Philadelphia, got in with some of the thrifty patriots who were valiantly badgering Arnold and taking supply contracts, and in a short time was clothier-general of the army. The year that the war closed he sought new fields of operation far

beyond the Alleghanies. It is said he had already squandered the money he made as clothier-general.

Here we have in this war hero among the border populace a man of talent and an accomplished demagogue. He had a convincing manner, and the tricks of the popular declaimer and agitator — captivations most effective for the time and the people. No man in the territory was more adroit, or fonder of adulation; and he at once adapted himself to his new environment.

The inhabitants of the new country from the Alleghany and Appalachian mountains to the Mississippi, and north of the Floridas, were in a complaining mood. The lands they occupied along the Ohio and the Southwest rivers that flowed to it, or to the father of waters, were fertile and productive, but the value of those great arteries of transportation was greatly impaired by the denial by the Spaniards in Louisiana to the Americans of the right of navigation of the Mississippi. They shut that great river to the commerce of the American Territories. This was in support of the old policy of Spanish statesmen to keep Louisiana a wilderness — a barren shield, or buffer, between Texas and Mexico and English and French aggression from the North and East. This, of course, before the American Revolution. It was argued that to allow the province to become populous and wealthy would make it too tempting a prize for the cupidity of her neighbors. The scheme involved a line of forts along the Mississippi,

and the limitation of settlement to a small colony around New Orleans.

While this policy of exclusion could not be maintained, the Spanish governors of Louisiana adhered to their dominion of the Mississippi, first by absolute prohibition, and later (for years subsequent to the Revolution) by tariffs that absorbed all profits of traffic to New Orleans. Although the Spaniards allied themselves with the Americans in the war with England, and took West Florida by conquest, the alliance was forgotten when peace came, and she erected as many restrictions as possible against the American frontiersmen and their trade. To be sure, Spain's war on Great Britain had not been out of sympathy for the United States, but in order to enforce her claim to the exclusive right to the navigation of the Gulf of Mexico. Her possessions, with the capture of West Florida, encircled the Gulf. Now, if she should lose the exclusive right to the navigation of the Mississippi, she would lose that of the Gulf also. And she considered that the reward due her for having jumped in and fought with the Americans in their hour of great need was that exclusive right.

It must be remembered also that, even after the relinquishment of the absurd old Spanish claim to the whole country eastward to the Alleghanies, they yet owned a considerable territory east of the Mississippi, including the Natchez district. So, considering the international

politics of the times, the claim of the Spaniards to the great river was not without the color of reason ; and her imposition of duties of forty per cent or more on the goods and produce sent down from the Ohio, the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and other rivers to her valuable market was clearly within her right. But it was rough on the American settlers. Their produce could not be transported over mountain ranges to the East in those days, and much of their crops rotted in the new-cleared fields. Add to this the constant depredations of the savages, which the Federal government was ill able to repel, and which occasioned great hardships to the westerners, and the cause of their discontent may easily be understood.

After James Wilkinson had traded and planted in Kentucky three years under these conditions, using all his arts and influence to increase the clamor of the people and to incite them to blame the government for all their distress, he turned speculator. He had figured out a possible way to beat the Spanish tariffs, and he plunged all his means and credit on the desperate move of putting it into execution. And it was nothing so innocent as simple smuggling, either. He bought up a cargo of tobacco, bacon, whiskey, and flour. It was all cheap, and what he could not pay for, which was most of it, he easily got on credit. He loaded the stuff on flatboats, and in June, 1787, shipped with it for New Orleans. He was not much of an admiral, but he did not have to go far from land, and

the nature of his cargo afforded good cheer for the journey. And so he floated down the Tennessee to the Ohio, and on to the fortified Mississippi, where Spanish guards and Spanish guns disputed the way.

Still the ex-brevet-brigadier drifted on. No such trader had ever before come down that old watercourse. Never such a browbeating, threatening, authoritative, wheedling, deceiving commodore of a backwater fleet had ever come that way; and he got to New Orleans intact, where, of course, everybody who had been overawed or hoodwinked by him said he would come to grief—that his whole shipment would be seized by Governor Miro, and sold. Either that or the shipper would pay the duties.

Well, this was the first time neither of those things happened to an American coming there, and everybody had a right to be astonished. But let them wait and see how this exceptional individual transacts business.

As usual, Governor Miro ordered the cargo seized. But that was before he met the owner. Soon Wilkinson presented himself before His Excellency. Now this Spanish governor was not any kind of fool, nor a tyro at his business. He had dealt with men of all kinds and many nationalities in holding his province aloof from the rest of the world, and so far none had cajoled him much. And it may as well be admitted at once that it is nothing particularly to the discredit of his acumen that he gave under now, for the record does not show that any living man,

from President Washington down to the humblest river guard on the border, ever came in contact with this man Wilkinson without being made a dupe or a cat's-paw of. Miro simply became one of them. First thing anyone knew he was giving banquets to his illustrious visitor—was not he a great warrior, a general from a victorious army and a great war? Had not Wilkinson had a chance to tell him about it?—and how could one hear, and look upon the man, and doubt?

The facts are that he had heard about Wilkinson. There had been correspondence between them. Miro understood that the ex-warrior was a man of extensive influence with the discontented Americans. Wilkinson soon convinced him of it, and in a short time was permitted to sell his cargo duty free. But that did not terminate his visit. He remained at New Orleans on intimate terms with the Governor. This, and the privilege of trading down the Mississippi and with the Spaniards, was much wondered at. News about it reached Kentucky and mystified the people—most of them. And along in September, Wilkinson took his departure, going by sea around to his old home, Philadelphia, and thence across country to Kentucky.

This is what had transpired. The wily American had approached the Spanish governor with a proposition in the interest of Spain. He related how greatly incensed the people of Kentucky and Tennessee were, how much

they desired the freedom of the Mississippi, and asserted, no doubt with impressive exaggeration, how bitter their feeling was against their government for not securing for them without delay the exemptions they desired. Wilkinson would enter into a compact, for certain considerations, to head a defection in Kentucky, secure the coöperation of the leading citizens, to separate the Territory from Virginia and from the Union, and to bring it under the protection and sovereignty of Spain. In this revolution Tennessee and Mississippi no doubt would join. With both attached to Louisiana, that immense province would have no further trouble in monopolizing the navigation of the Mississippi; that river would then flow through the middle of the extended Spanish possessions, with the United States having no frontage on it below the Ohio. Nor would it be necessary longer to keep Louisiana unpeopled as a safeguard against encroachments on Texas.

It was a grand, glittering, audacious scheme. Perhaps no other man west of the Alleghanies could have won the confidence of Miro in its feasibility — the Spaniard would have doubted the capacity of any other to carry it through. That Wilkinson convinced him by evidence other than words that he already had a number of influential associates enlisted in the treasonable undertaking, is certain. In fact, several were no doubt actual partners with him in the cargo he had brought — he had different

partnerships in others following, through many years. And the theory has been advanced by some that Wilkinson's whole object in his traitorous engagement with Miro was to secure an exclusive trading privilege which, in a short time, must enrich him. But as a matter of truth, this adroit veteran of the Revolution had greater designs than those he disclosed to Governor Miro. He had contracted visions of a great and independent State, of which he would be the ruler. Sovereignty had been rapidly shifting. Spain was declining—he did not believe the political conditions of the world would permit her long to hold these desirable American provinces. To wrest them from her, after the great region from the Ohio to the Floridas had been wrested from the United States, would be a simple military stroke. In the combined territory an army of twenty thousand men could be raised. As for the American government, it would have enough to do to keep together what would be left, without attempting a war to restrain her troublesome border districts from seceding.

As Miro looked at it, the realization of the plan would restore Spain's waning prestige on the continent, and be a glorifying stroke for himself; but his range of vision was not the same as Wilkinson's. However, he took the latter at his offer, and they immediately set at work "making out the papers." If it were not for those papers, and the letters which the Governor received from Wilkinson,

the fact of the conspiracy would never have been proved to the convincing of the American people of the depths of Wilkinson's villainy. All other proofs he took care to destroy or vitiate. No plotter was ever more cunning at covering up the tracks he left in the paths of obloquy. He was a long calculator, was Wilkinson, and the combinations of guile which he operated are often as puzzling as they are amazing.

During his long stay at New Orleans, on his first visit, he reckoned that suspicions would go out, and that they might reach Washington. So he cultivated the intimacy of one Daniel Clark, at that time assistant to the Secretary of the Province. Clark was twenty-one years old, an Irishman by birth, but a naturalized Spanish citizen, and a shrewd fellow, as his career amply proves. To hoodwink the United States officials, Wilkinson induced Clark to write a memorial which some time later was addressed by the latter to the American Secretary of State, complaining that Wilkinson had by intimidation extorted from Governor Miro the privilege of trading to New Orleans, in the interest of the people of his Territory; thus making out a case for Wilkinson's patriotism, although not for his politeness to foreign neighbors. This memorial was of great value to Wilkinson years afterward, as will appear.

Soon after arriving home, Wilkinson addressed a letter to Señor Gardoqui, the Spanish minister to the United States,



GOVERNOR DON ESTEVAN MIRO  
*Spanish Provincial Governor of Louisiana*

1.

2.

3.

4.

in which he discussed his negotiations with Governor Miro. In this letter he declared he had nothing to hope for from the Union, and that if his proposition to Miro were rejected by Spain, he would open negotiations with Great Britain, which power had already been in communication with him on similar business. It is likely that he used this argument to hasten Miro's consent to his proposition in the first instance, and he now used it to induce the Spanish court to approve of Miro's decision. And probably it was true, for Great Britain made the same proposition, that is, a proposal to send a force to combine with the Americans of the Southwest for the conquest of Louisiana, to others; it being this scheme which, a few years later, got Senator Blount of Tennessee on the gridiron. Anyway, Miro sent a glowing account of the prospect to his government, in which he wrote: "The delivering up of Kentucky into his Majesty's hands [meaning his Spanish Majesty], which is the main object to which Wilkinson has promised to devote himself entirely, would forever constitute this Province a rampart for the protection of New Spain." Texas was then called New Spain.

Miro at the same time advised against the colonization enterprises which Minister Gardoqui, at Philadelphia, was approving, including the opening of Louisiana to trade with Americans under a twenty-five per cent tariff. A grant had already been given Colonel George D. Morgan, another Revolutionary veteran, who founded New Madrid

under its authority. This also displeased Wilkinson, who feared Morgan was treading on his preserves. He wrote Miro his objections, which that functionary thought reasonable, for he advised his government that the colonization plans, which Gardoqui had placed in the hands of one D'Arges, would conflict with General Wilkinson's. He stated further that if they were continued, D'Arges might expose the general's projects and cause Wilkinson to be arrested; that Wilkinson objected to anyone else participating in a confidential proceeding upon which depended his life and honor. Continuing Miro said:

"Hence I consider as a misfortune the project of D'Arges, because I look upon the commercial franchises which he has obtained for the western colonists . . . as destructive of the great design which has been conceived! The western people would no longer have any reason to emigrate, if they were put in possession of a free trade with us. This is the reason why this privilege should be granted only to a few individuals having influence among them, as is suggested in Wilkinson's memorial; because, on their seeing this advantage bestowed on these few, they might be easily persuaded to acquire the like by becoming Spanish subjects. . . . I can conceive of but one case which would justify the granting to those people the free exercise of their religion; that is, if Kentucky could not be prevailed upon to give herself up to his Majesty without this condition."

But the question of religion did not trouble Wilkinson. He could swear on the holy evangelists of Almighty God quite as impressively as a Catholic as anything else. He already was talking of becoming a Spaniard. Among his first letters to Miro he said: "I have collected much European and American news, and have made various interesting observations for our political designs. It would take a volume to tell you all. I pray you to content yourself with this assurance — all my predictions are verifying themselves, and not a measure is taken on both sides of the mountains which does not conspire to favor ours. . . . I beg you to be easy, and to be satisfied that nothing shall deter me from attending exclusively to the object we have in hand; and I am convinced that the success of our plan will depend on the disposition of the court."

And then, to show how smooth a Spaniard he had already become, he turns off this benediction — "I take leave of you with the most ardent prayers to the Almighty for your spiritual and temporal welfare, and I beg to subscribe myself your unalterably devoted friend, and your most faithful, humble, and obliged servant."

In this business of fomenting treason among his countrymen Wilkinson became a regular pensionary of Spain. That Miro had some doubts, and hesitated awhile before putting up any money, is shown by his letters. Finally, Wilkinson sent a certain Major Isaac Dunn down to New Orleans with a shipment of produce and a letter

introducing him to the governor as an old army comrade in whose honor, discretion, and talents he placed great reliance. Wilkinson always underlined honor. He had chosen Dunn as a fit auxiliary to their political designs, the same being embraced by him with cordiality. This man seems to have impressed Miro favorably, and he confirmed all that Wilkinson had declared. He had heard it expressed by their most distinguished citizens, had Dunn, that the direction of the current of their rivers pointed clearly to the power to which they (the Americans) ought to ally themselves. The same, of course, being Spain.

In stating these circumstances, Governor Miro tells us more about Wilkinson. He says he had no money; that he borrowed \$3000 on his first visit to New Orleans, and begged the governor not to seize his cargo, which had cost \$7000 in Kentucky, and on which he was counting to pay his debts. "He seems candid, and I hear good reports of him, but he may be seeking to enrich himself at our expense by inflating us with vain hopes and promises. But I concluded to humor him."

Later Miro wrote that he was more assured. He heard from various sources of the work in Kentucky, and of Wilkinson's utterances reflecting on the Federal government. Thus Wilkinson began to draw Spanish gold, and became an emissary of Spain in the conspiracy of his own hatching to disrupt the Union. He continued his mer-

chandising, sending cargoes of bacon, whiskey, pink-root, cowbells, pelts, hickory-nut oil, and other products to New Orleans, where he now had Daniel Clark as a factor, and must have made money. On one deal he was enabled to buy a boat-load of stores to the amount of \$18,246 with the proceeds of a cargo that cost him about \$7000. If the result of this traffic were known to the people of Kentucky — and a good many probably did know something about it — it must have had its influence in inclining them toward Spanish allegiance. Kentucky, now a part of Virginia, was preparing for separate statehood. Several conventions were held to devise a constitution, at one of which Wilkinson read what he represented as the compact he had made with Miro, but it was divested of its most treasonable passages. Yet it advocated the separation of Kentucky from the Union, and invoked the aid of Spain. Then he wrote Miro that the convention had received it with approval; and Miro observed that Wilkinson had so bound himself that, should he not be able to obtain the separation of Kentucky from the United States, he could no longer live there. Miro knew treason when he saw it.

It was a fact that the scheme had involved a number of other prominent citizens almost as deeply as himself. He made especial mention of Colonel Alex. Leatt Bullitt; Harry Innes, then attorney general, afterward a Federal judge; John Brown, afterward member of

Congress; and Judge Benjamin Sebastian. The last named also became a Spanish pensionary. Wilkinson informed Miro that, as soon as the State government was organized, they would name a political agent with power to treat with him on the change of sovereignty. In the meantime he hoped to receive his Excellency's orders, "which I will do my utmost to execute."

"I don't anticipate any obstacle from Congress, because under the present Federal compact that body can neither dispose of men nor money, and the new government, should it establish itself, will have to encounter difficulties which will keep it weak for three or four years, before the expiration of which I have good grounds to hope that we shall have completed our negotiations, and shall have become too strong to be subjected by any force that may be sent against us."

That paragraph explains a great deal of what was on Wilkinson's mind, and in part it expressed the feeling and belief of thousands: distrust in the new government, doubt of its efficiency, and readiness to take advantage of its infantile weakness — before the constitution was adopted.

About this time Martin Navarro, who had been intendant-general of Louisiana, struck off a white-hot prophecy. He was about to return to Spain, his office having been consolidated with the governorship for the purpose of giving Miro unshackled facilities to conduct

the intrigue, the policy on both sides being to keep the affair in as few hands as possible. Navarro's last despatch was a memorial to his sovereign, at the request of the secretary of the department of the Indies. In this paper he pointed to the dangers, present and possible, which Spain had to apprehend "from the new nation of thirteen provinces now federated in one ambitious giant thirsty for conquest, and which would not rest content till he has extended his domain across the continent, and bathed his vigorous young limbs in the placid waters of the Pacific."

That is not so bad for a Spaniard in 1790. Then Señor Navarro ventured some advisory suggestions. Could the expansion of the new giant be prevented? Yes — by severing the new Union in time; by dividing from the Atlantic States the expansive West, where vast power was now slumbering in the lap of the wilderness. And the best way to do this was for Spain to reverse her former policy, and grant every commercial privilege to the Western region.

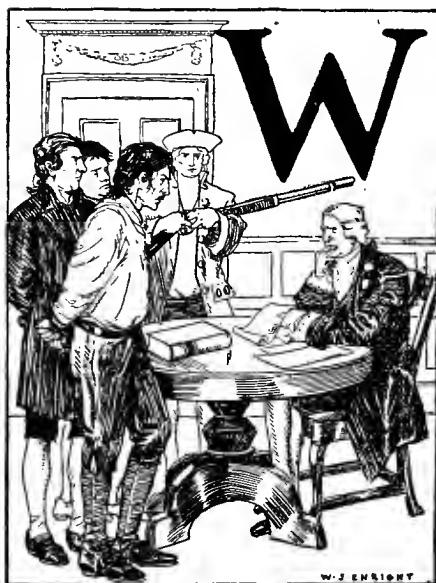
Those were the words of a statesman, and they at least had the effect of strengthening the Madrid government in backing Miro. D'Arges received instructions to assist to his utmost the plan to divide the United States. Wilkinson, in his letters, several times expressed grave fears of detection; declared his lack of confidence of the Colonel Morgan who had received a

grant of twenty square miles; said he had set a spy on Morgan, who was overstepping his authority; and complained of the bad treatment both he and Morgan got from Washington and the Congress. He declared that all those who were put in Federal offices were enemies of Spain, that Congress suspected him and spied upon his movements. "Consequently," he continued plaintively, "the avowed intention on my part to induce these people here to separate from the Union before a majority of them show a disposition to support me, would endanger my personal security. My situation is mortally painful, because, while I abhor all duplicity, I am obliged to dissemble."

One can almost hear Miro chuckle to himself as he read that. Yet in it he discerned a weakening on Wilkinson's part, and answered him caustically to continue to dissemble and not try to be a Spaniard. He continued, however, to pay Wilkinson \$2000 a year to coddle the Kentuckians Spanishwise; and, lacking full faith in his sincerity, he got into secret communication with Judge Sebastian, one of Wilkinson's trusted associates, on the same business, and paid him an equal stipend to spy on Wilkinson. At the same time the latter was bribing Clark at New Orleans to watch the antics of the governor; and thus the intrigue went merrily on.

## CHAPTER II

*Plots for Disunion — Genet, "Citizen" Minister from France, Arrives — Attempts to Raise an Army of Conquest in America — Much Disloyalty — Bold Schemes Frustrated.*



**W**HILE Wilkinson, whose hope saw the glimmer of sovereign power over a vast region, conspired with Miro, and trafficked and caroused with the restless frontiersmen, there were other things happening along the Southern border. There was also discontent in Georgia, where valuable slaves had

too frequent a habit of dashing for freedom over into Spanish Florida among the everglades, whence it was next to impossible to hunt down and recover them. Besides, no matter how fertile their own valleys, or how abundant the game in their forests, many of the Georgian pioneers

longed for the lands about which they heard such glowing accounts, lying far to the westward.

This desire for new possessions, or envy of the Spaniards, resulted in 1785 in an exodus of several hundred Georgians over into the Spanish country near Natchez. They were led by one Thomas Green, who seems to have been a "colonist" of high daring and low ethics. With their families, their baggage, their oxen, and slaves, they traversed forest and morass, intending to stay and possess the soil whenever they found it suitable, regardless of pre-occupancy. The wooded hills near the Mississippi, where nature had struck a balance between mountain and plain, seemed desirable. There they unyoked, and parcelled out the land among themselves. True, the district was inhabited, for there was a Spanish fort at Natchez; and the interlopers seem to have shown the forbearance of not shooting the commandant, although that official refused to recognize their authority.

It does not lessen the transgression that the territory was claimed by the United States as having been acquired from Great Britain after the war. Spain had conquered it from the English by hard fighting during the Revolution, and had possession. The Spanish declaration that Britain could not cede territory she did not possess probably would have been granted as reasonable by anybody but Americans. However, the interlopers set up a government and "elected" Green Governor. His proclamation

indicates that he was in the loose enjoyment of a sub-normal conscience, and no doubt his followers were all pretty much like him.

Mr. Gardoqui, Spain's representative at Washington, protested against this forcible intrusion, and Congress, after learning the facts, passed an act of wonderment at the audacity of the Georgians. "Although they [Congress] conceive that they have an undoubted right to all the territory specified, yet they view with real concern the unaccountable attempt of any individuals of these States to disturb the peace between the two nations; and that the delegates from Georgia should disavow the appointment of Thomas Green as governor."

This must have been crushing to the timid and sensitive spirit of the said Green, even if Congress and Georgia and the delegates let it go at that, and left him and his fellows in the disputed territory, contesting authority with the Spanish commandant. It likewise must have been edifying to Mr. Gardoqui to note the shock of grief Congress suffered over the affair.

There was great exasperation over the report that Congress had proposed a compromise with Spain over the Mississippi, consenting it should remain closed to American commerce for twenty-five years, after that to be open to all. Spain would not agree. But the Western people were angry, and began to arm. They were secretly encouraged by England, still at war with Spain, and ready

also to stab the young Republic. George Rogers Clark was the person through whom she schemed. He began enlisting militia along the Ohio, and seizing Spanish property between Fort Vincennes and the Mississippi. Thomas Green, the next year after his invasion of the Natchez district, also began preparation for more warlike enterprises. He recruited a company of militia at what is now Louisville, and another on the Cumberland, which he and others armed and drilled. That these determined men had objects in view beyond the mere forcing of open navigation of the great river, is hardly a matter of doubt. A secret circular letter sent from Ohio Falls (Louisville) indicated a much larger plan, and a letter written Dec. 4, 1786, from the same place by a prominent citizen — attributed by some to Thomas Green — to a New England friend, echoes the rumblings of the time :

“We can raise twenty thousand troops this side of the Alleghanies, and the annual increase of them by immigration is from two thousand to four thousand. We have taken all the goods belonging to the Spanish merchants at Post Vincennes and on the Illinois, and are determined they shall not trade up the river, provided they will not let us trade down it. Preparations are now making here (if necessary) to drive the Spaniards from their settlements at the mouth of the Mississippi. In case we are not countenanced and succored by the United States (if we need it) *our allegiance will be thrown off* and some other

power applied to. Great Britain stands ready with open arms to receive and support us. They have already offered to open their resources for our supplies. When once reunited to them, farewell, a long farewell to all your boasted greatness! The province of Canada and the inhabitants of these waters [rivers] of themselves in time will be able to conquer you [people east of the Alleghanies]. You are as ignorant of this country as Great Britain was of America."

And then, referring to the proposed treaty-compromise to block up the Mississippi for twenty-five years to all Americans, and which was erroneously reported to have been entered into, the writer declared it had given the West a shock. "To sell us and make us vassals to the merciless Spaniards is a grievance not to be borne."

A veteran of the Revolution named Sullivan wrote that "the country abounds with the seeds of war." It looked as though the patriotism of the Western people was all out. Wilkinson, who had himself been in communication with the British (or was soon afterward), grew jealous of General Clark, and in a letter remarked: "Clark is playing hell—raising a regiment of his own. Seized a Spanish boat and stores worth \$20,000. I laid a plot to get the whole seized and secured for the owners." A protest against Clark's acts was made by the Kentucky legislature—for eastern consumption. Harry Innes, one of Wilkinson's co-conspirators, and then attorney general,

wrote to Governor Randolph of Virginia : " I am decidedly of the opinion that the Western country will, in a few years, revolt from the Union and endeavor to enact an independent government, for, under the present system, we can not exert our strength ; neither does Congress seem disposed to protect us. . . I have just dropped this hint to your Excellency for reflection."

Both this Harry Innes and his brother James, who also was an office-holder at the time, were in the movement, imbued with the spirit of revolt, and no doubt felt sure of its ultimate success. Harry's conduct at this time and for long afterward could have been prompted by no worthier motive. Twenty years later he was charged by a newspaper with having been in such a conspiracy with General Wilkinson, Judge Sebastian, and John Brown, the latter a member of Congress ; and the three of them hired a lawyer to write and publish a pamphlet attempting to exonerate them, to whom they furnished a garbled copy of the letter to Randolph, leaving out "revolt from the Union," and other incriminating phrases, and making it appear by argument that Innes merely advocated the separation of Kentucky as a Territory from Virginia, and setting up her own State government. This is typical of the methods employed by the treason-schemers of that section and era, and of their later apologists.

All the early plottings for the dismemberment of the Union contemplated a division between the East and the

West, not between the North and the South, — a fact made interesting by later efforts at secession.

The finger-marks of James Wilkinson are apparent throughout this dark record. On April 11, 1789, Lord Dorchester, Governor General of Canada, wrote from Quebec to Lord Sydney in England, telling him of the disaffection of the Americans of the Southwest, and the possibility of detaching them from the United States; he also enclosed a paper giving their political reflections "by a Gentleman of Kentucky."

Now in these "reflections," as pointed out by Thomas Marshall Green in his "Spanish Conspiracy," there is not an idea expressed, hardly a sentiment or argument uttered, that does not appear in identical or very similar phrasing in Wilkinson's subsequent letters to the Spanish Governor Miro, when he was entering into his treasonable compact with him, — germs from the same fountain of treason.

In 1789 Wilkinson asked for a large grant of land in Louisiana, — "a place of refuge for myself and adherents in case it should be necessary for us to retire from this country in order to avoid the resentment of Congress." If he was going to be "a good Spaniard," why should n't he have a Spanish estate? But Miro thought he would better remain in Kentucky till the contemplated alliance with Spain was effected. Wilkinson was "working" the Governor continually, and Miro recommended that the amount which the general claimed to have expended in

furthering the conspiracy, \$5000, be refunded to him, and also that he be given \$2500 more to enable him to complete the corruption of some of his associates. He got other large sums from Miro, as will be seen later on the testimony of Daniel Clark. The comedy element of this whole wretched intrigue is glimpsed from the financial side.

Wilkinson came to Kentucky "a needy and unscrupulous adventurer." He brought his wife to the miserable tavern at Lexington, a typical hostelry of the Southwest in early times, where fried pork was served three times a day, and whiskey continuously. He loitered in the ill-smelling barroom with the "gentlemen" of the backwoods town, the best of whom spent hours a day at cards, constantly chewing tobacco, drinking, spitting, and most of them profaning at every breath. After he "got to going" with the Spaniards, he set up a house and equipage, gave parties, talked loudly about his Mississippi River enterprises, always hinting at advantages to be gained by being joined to Louisiana, and of course gambling heavier than ever. This probably accounts for his usually being in financial embarrassment, for he always had a liberal income. General St. Clair heard of his scheming and wrote Major Dunn, now Wilkinson's partner, expressing regret, and asking him to use his influence to stop the general's disloyalty. Dunn sent the letter to Wilkinson, who sent a copy of it to Miro as evidence that he was earning his pension.



GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON

*An instigator of plots with Spanish Governors*



His despatches to Miro were carried in a small trunk weighted with rocks, and orders were given the men to sink it in case there arose any danger of the contents falling into other hands. Once, in 1794, Wilkinson sent a man named Owen to New Orleans to receive the treason stipend due him. On the way back, Owen was murdered on the Ohio River by the boatmen, either Spanish or French, who seized the money, amounting to about \$6000. Three of the murderers were caught near Frankfort and brought before Federal Judge Innes. Now this Harry Innes was Wilkinson's right bower, probably slated to be Minister of State in the new government under him. Some of the corruption fund taken by the robbers would no doubt have gone into his pocket—a little of it. And the murdered man had been his personal friend; in fact, had been recommended by him for the confidential mission.

Yet when those three cutthroats were brought before Innes he dared not try them. He feared the trial would uncover the real facts about the lucre—which might prove exceedingly embarrassing for the judge. Not only himself, if he had wanted to be self-sacrificing, but there was the whole Kentucky clique that might be exposed, including his friend, Judge Sebastian. So he sent them under guard to Wilkinson, who was then at Fort Washington (Cincinnati), with the flimsy

statement that the crime had been committed on Spanish territory, and therefore outside of his jurisdiction. That was absurdly untrue, as his jurisdiction extended up and down both sides of the Ohio, and the scene of the crime was far from Spanish land. But it was as good an excuse as any for Wilkinson, who grasped the situation in a twinkling. It is safe to say that the judge felt confidence in Wilkinson's resources for disposing of them all safely enough; and ordinarily such confidence would have been justified. But a jumble will sometimes occur in the shrewdest of plans.

Wilkinson was on intimate terms with the commandant at New Madrid, the nearest Spanish post. This officer probably knew something of Wilkinson's affiliations with the Spaniards, at least the general felt he could trust him to perform a friendly duty; so he sent the red-handed rascals down to him, with a statement of the case. This meant, of course, a summary execution of them without any troublesome exposures from trial. On the way down, however, while passing Fort Massac, an American post, the officer commanding there interfered. Not liking the murky look of things he arrested the party, and sent over to New Madrid for an interpreter to interrogate the prisoners, who conveniently declined to understand or express themselves in English. The Spanish commandant got an inkling of the circumstances in some way and sent

a "fixed" interpreter, who either did not divulge the confessions made by the trio, or twisted the answers so as to persuade the officer that they were innocent; and all three of the villains were discharged.

The adoption of the Constitution in 1789 and the election of Washington as President steadied things just a little throughout the Southwest, the result more of confidence in the man than in the instrument. But whatever pacification might have resulted — whatever setback the promoters of disunion might have experienced from these providential happenings — was soon to be more than counterbalanced by a new and most aggravating element of mischief. This was precipitated upon the country by the chaotic government of France in the person of Charles Edmond Genet — "Citizen" Genet, most commonly called — minister of the Robespierre republic. That rattle-headed, insolent, and altogether insufferable egotist landed on the American shore not so much with the idea of representing France here as with the conviction that he was ordained to take control of the government and country, and conduct them as auxiliaries of the French terrorists. He was a young man with some experience as a diplomat, but he seemed to be ignorant of the elementary principles of diplomacy. Sponge-brained and garrulous, he was also saturated with the violent democratic doctrines then raging in France, and was impressive in the cant

of "liberty and fraternity." His notion was that, as France had aided America in her struggle, America must now become an ally with France in her war with Europe.

The administration, being now at peace with all nations, adopted a policy of neutrality with respect to France and her troubles, and already was being blackguarded by a faction of hotheads before Genet arrived. The "citizen" minister did not land at the seat of government, but at Charleston, where he found many ready partisans. He brought with him four hundred commissions in blank, which he was authorized to bestow upon leaders of the army which he was to raise against the English and Spanish on this continent — France being at war with both those nations. The very first thing, he began to distribute them to the South Carolinians, and to begin the organization of troops. Before he had been there long he learned about the dissatisfaction of the inhabitants beyond the mountains westward, and seemed to assume that it was a provision of Providence to aid him in his grand scheme of mobilization. Through them he would surely overthrow Spanish sovereignty in Louisiana and Florida; and this led directly to the larger scheme of establishing an independent nation out of those provinces and such States and Territories as he could induce to secede from the Union, — a nation which would be dependent on France, with Genet as "citizen" ruler.



“CITIZEN” GENET

*Minister from France to the United States*



Two expeditions to this end were planned by him while he was at Charleston. Distinguished citizens engaged in them. The brotherly-love excitement spread. The desire to invade Florida prevailed in Georgia to an alarming extent.

Colonel Elijah Clarke, in that State, a veteran of the Revolution, was given a commission of brigadier-general in the French army, and soon was enthusiastically employed at recruiting and making military preparations. Genet also supplied him with funds, as he did others. After getting things thus to moving nicely the minister went on to Philadelphia, meeting ovations all along the way. Very much to his astonishment the administration did not abdicate in his favor. Neutrality! Gods and guillotines! What was America for, if not to be ally of France? Spirit of equality, and democracy, and brotherly love by decapitation! Fraternity and frenzy! And so he stormed at the rebuffs he got. He was desperately scandalized at finding that Washington had a bust of Louis XVI., who had been his friend in a dark hour, and declared that Washington was trying to set up a monarchy. Seeing that the government frowned on his impertinence, he struck out in a sort of wilful competition, even threatening to appeal from Washington to the people.

At Charleston he had found an efficient lieutenant in the French consul at that city, Michel Ange Bernard de Mangourit, a man much on the Genet model. The two

Frenchmen at once came into intimate relations with Governor Moultrie, of South Carolina, who gave Mangourit letters of introduction to prominent men, and was in sympathy with their project. That commonwealth, from the formation of the Union, was always quick to the fore in any scheme to dismember it. Now, from Philadelphia Genet sent emissaries to the West and Southwest, to arouse the people to sympathy with France, and antipathy to their own country. Principal among these were Auguste La Chaise and his associates, Delpeau, Mathurin, and Gignoux. These agents were provided with funds. A "democratic society" had been organized in Philadelphia, modelled on the Jacobin club in Paris. Other "democratic clubs" were started throughout the country, including Georgetown, Paris, and Lexington, in Kentucky; these clubs being meeting-places for the agitators who were displeased with their government for any cause. The members wore white cockades to show their love for France, sang French revolutionary songs, or made a horrid effort at it, denounced every policy designed to promote peace and order, and encouraged resistance to taxes. Finally they were incited by Genet's emissaries to open riot and revolt; and then the mustering began. George Rogers Clark was given a commission as brigadier-general in the French army and was to have command of the levies of this region. His apologists have explained that his engagement in this lawless enterprise was done in a

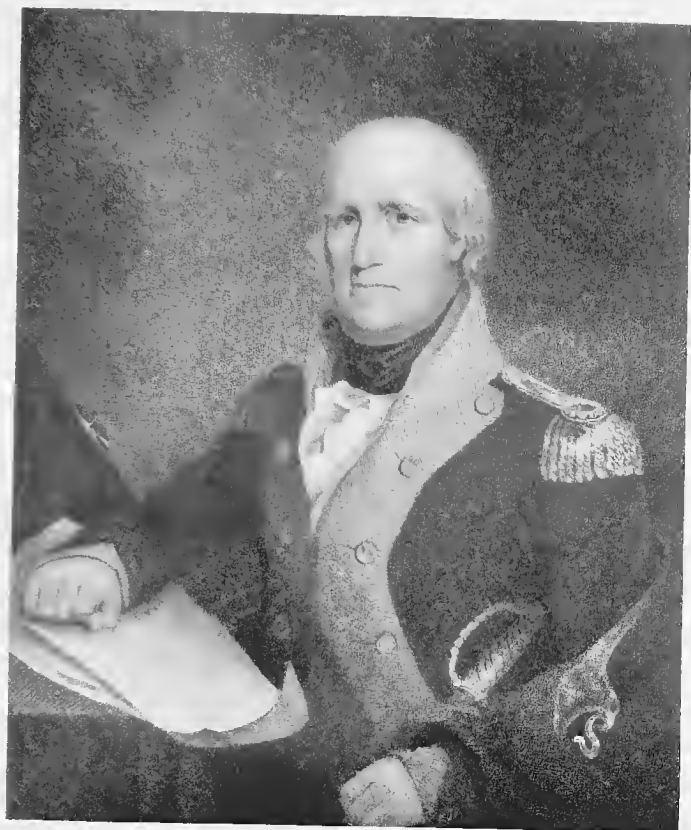
moment of weakness; that he was inveigled with the assurance that "a major-general in the armies of France, and commander-in-chief of the revolutionary legion on the Mississippi" was something finer than he could hope for in any other service. The fact is he had become a hard drinker, and his principles were loose.

As a French brigadier, Clark issued proposals for volunteers for the reduction of the Spanish forts along the Mississippi, etc. Flattering inducements were offered. All volunteers were to be entitled to one thousand acres of land each; those who served one year were to have two thousand acres; those who served three years, or during the war between France and Spain, three thousand acres of any unoccupied land that should be conquered, officers in proportion. The pay was to be the same as that of "other French troops." All lawful plunder was to be equally divided according to the customs of war, and every soldier who entered the service was to be given the choice of taking the land or cash pay at one dollar per day. Clark had authority to make military appointments in the name of the French republic, and he issued a lot of commissions — Major Williamson, Colonel Carr, Captain Bird, etc.

Never was a more rapacious scheme of pillage and conquest projected. And the encouragement it received from the Western people, not only the reckless irresponsibles, but men of property and high officials, is astounding.

Kentucky had lately been admitted to the Union as a State. Her first governor was Colonel Isaac Shelby. He had won his title in the War of Independence, serving with distinction at King's Mountain, and on Marion's memorable campaign. He had been a member of the legislature of North Carolina, and was regarded a stanch patriot, who had done real fighting. Yet now, when the very life of the Union hung in the balance, when Washington was beset with troubles on every hand—dissensions in the cabinet, envy and distrust in nearly every State, and his old enemy plotting on the Northern borders—knowing all this, the old soldier Shelby, now a governor, hearkened to the demagogues, became infected with the excitement over French "liberty" and the prospect of conquest, and was ready to sanction an enterprise that would disgrace his country and his own fair name.

Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State, notified Shelby that Genet was sending his agents to Kentucky, and cautioned him to prevent them from carrying out his designs. Shelby, replied,—“I think it my duty to assure you that I shall be particularly attentive to prevent any attempts of the nature of the expedition from this country. I am well persuaded at present none such is contemplated in this State,” etc. That was Oct. 5, 1793. On Nov. 6, Jefferson wrote Shelby again not to permit the French emissaries to excite the people to hostile acts against Spain. The Kentucky legislature met that month,



GENERAL GEORGE ROGERS CLARK

*Revolutionary hero who espoused Genet's cause*



and in his message Shelby did not once mention Jefferson's instructions, in truth did not even refer to the French scheme, although it was then under way. Nor did he issue any proclamation against it. He received communications from La Chaise, one of which advised him he had letters to him (the Governor) from Genet, and saying he would send him a copy of "our excellent constitution which has been generally accepted."

So they were going to have a constitutional government anyway, having drafted the constitution before having anything to apply it to. Judges Innes and Sebastian (Wilkinson's associates) and Governor Shelby connived at the marauding outfit. In January, 1794, Shelby wrote the Secretary of State in a different tone from his first letter. It professed to put the President in possession of all facts relating to the uprising, yet concealed from him the correspondence he had had with La Chaise and Delpeau, and of the letters sent to him by Genet. It really suggested also that nothing had been done, in spite of Clark's proposals for enlistment, and all the preparations that were going on. He no doubt hoped the expedition would get on its way before the President could restrain it. He now quibbled about his authority.

"I have grave doubts," he wrote Jefferson, "even if General Clark and the Frenchmen attempt to carry this plan into execution, whether there is any legal authority to restrain or punish them, at least before they have actually

accomplished it," and went on pettifogging about there being no law to punish unlawful intent. The enlistments were going on while the legislature was in session. No action against it was taken by that body.

In the Spring of 1794, an agent of General Elijah Clarke, of Georgia, was at Lexington engaged in the purchase of five hundred pounds of powder, one ton of cannon balls, and provisions to be ready for shipment in boats by April 15. Boat-builders and other artisans were busy under orders for the expedition. Some of the United States troops guarding the frontier against Indians deserted to join the enterprise. Clarke is said to have had money from Genet, and some of the inhabitants of Lexington, if not otherwheres, secretly subscribed to the war fund.

In March, 1794, Spanish commissioners laid before the Secretary of State a complaint that an expedition was preparing against East Florida; that an American, Colonel Samuel Hammond, was to have command of it; that one Captain Hammond was appointed to enroll the people in the county of Camden; that the troops to be enlisted were to take an oath of fidelity to France; and that a naval force was ready to act in concert with them. Also that there were in the county of Camden sixteen hundred cavalry in three divisions, under orders of Colonel Hammond, who had been appointed a brigadier general in the French service, who had the cavalry fully equipped and officered, with two large magazines of provisions and

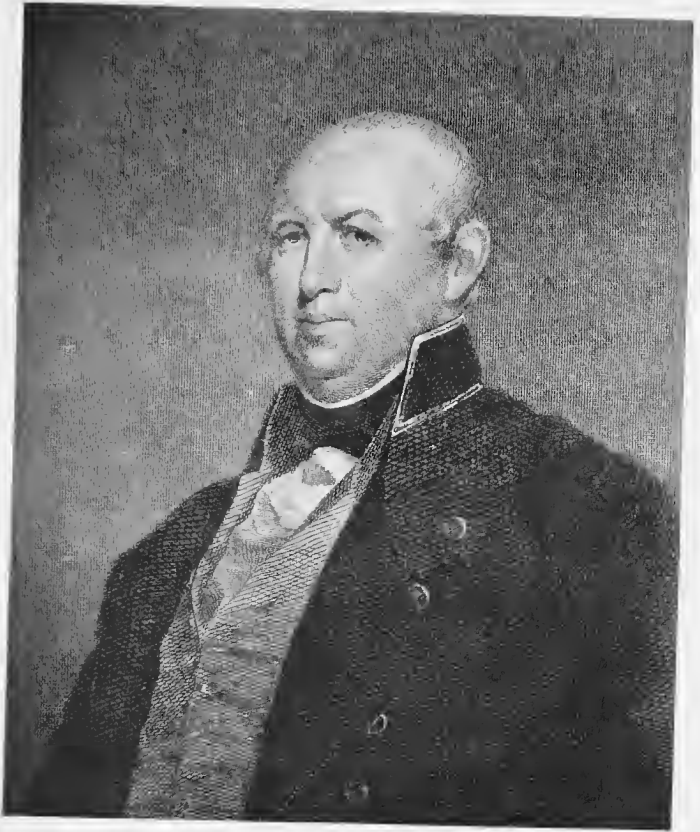
ammunition purchased by Abner Hammond, brother to the general, who had been commissioned colonel. And further, that there were three French frigates ready to sail from the port of Beaufort with one thousand or eleven hundred men on board, all to attack East Florida by sea and land.

These frigates had sailed from Charleston and other Southern ports against the protest of the American government. The French sloop-of-war *Las Casses* anchored off St. Marys, destined for Louisiana. Genet granted commissions to raise troops in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina, and probably in other States. It is estimated that over two thousand men were enrolled in the Southwest and partly armed before the President issued his proclamation warning the people of the consequences of engaging in such outlawry. Governor Mathews of Georgia also issued a proclamation against it, and the South Carolina legislature ordered an inquiry. But Shelby in Kentucky did nothing, although he had been ordered to use the militia if necessary. Finally Edmund Randolph, who succeeded Jefferson as Secretary of State, wrote the Governor sharply concerning his errors. Shelby, as well as the attorney general and other State officials, fraternized with members of the rabid democratic insurrectionary clubs, some of them being members.

Shelby's mind was in a state of moral degradation as to his official duties and responsibilities when he

could apologize for and abet such an outrage against the peace, safety, and dignity of his country. He was a distiller, and a gentleman of that school. Like many others who bore the taint of disloyalty, he could in after years prate loud of patriotism. In 1812, in a Fourth of July address, he attempted to condone his queer conduct of this time, by explaining that he intended to impress on the government the importance of the navigation of the Mississippi, apparently having forgotten that negotiations to open it had at the time of this episode been long under way, and soon after were consummated. When questioned as to this speech, Shelby admitted there was "some inconsistency" between his two letters to Jefferson, but excused himself by declaring he thought the whole scheme would fall to the ground without his interference; and expressed his regret that he had for a moment kept the President uneasy. It amuses one to find that some Kentucky historians acquit him on that "explanation," and it astounds us to find that Monroe, when he became President in 1817, offered Shelby the war secretaryship, which he would not accept because of his advanced age.

Well, the whole harebrained, treasonable enterprise did "fall through," but not because of any patriotic opposition in the South and West. At the request of President Washington, Genet was recalled by his government, which declared the "citizen" had exceeded his



GOVERNOR ISAAC SHELBY  
*Of Kentucky*



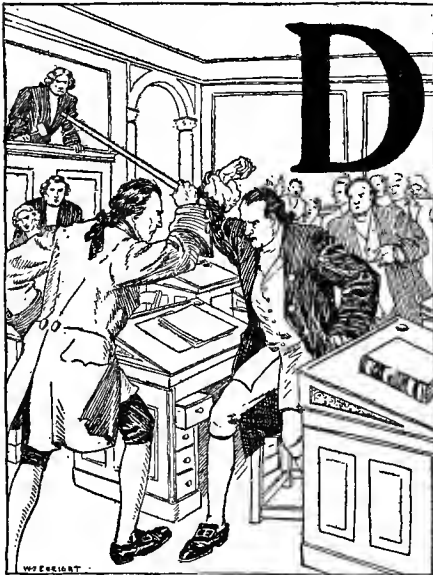
authority. When Fauchet, successor to Genet, arrived and denounced the warlike proceedings, Mangourit at Charleston could not credit it, and almost went into spasms over his disappointment. It was just in time to prevent a vigorous attack on East Florida. But the money stopped, Genet was out, and that ended it.

Probably a parallel case cannot be found in history where a minister plenipotentiary, after openly insulting the government to which he was accredited, attempted to use his credentials to enroll an army in that country for the purpose of conquest over a third power with which his government was at war and the country in which he operated at peace. And when it is considered that his ultimate object was to found an independent government partly out of territory to be wrested from the friendly nation receiving him, it appears a case so monstrous as not likely ever to be repeated.

Yet after his outrageous acts had been repudiated by his government, — acts so desperate that he dared not go home and face the consequences, — it seems incongruous that he should have become a respected American citizen, marrying a daughter of Governor Clinton of New York. One of his biographers asserts that he became an ornament to society. Whether that was intended as a compliment to Genet or a reflection upon the society of his day is unimportant.

## CHAPTER III

*Wilkinson, again in the Army, still Conspires with Spanish Governors  
— Disgrace of Senator Blount — Examples of Land Operations —  
Romantic Career of Renegade Bowles.*



**D**URING the frenzy generated by Genet little was heard of Wilkinson. That Genet was audaciously infringing upon his own secret letters patent of treason, although with a differently declared object, caused him much chagrin. He was now in the army again, having re-

entered the service in 1791 as a lieutenant-colonel, and was drawing a salary from the United States government under the sworn duty of protecting it, and another from Spain for promoting plans to shatter it. He was in charge of the militia along the Ohio. His trading ventures

ended in bankruptcy. He was always profligate, "with debts as numerous as his creditors were clamorous." There had been a change of governors in Louisiana, Carondelet having succeeded Miro, but the same relations were maintained with Wilkinson. That explains why the latter did not appear in any way as a supporter of the Frenchman's scheme. He impressed upon the Spaniards that he was doing them noble service in discouraging the threatened invasion of their possessions—and requested corresponding rewards. So he really turned Genet's operation to his own advantage.

Carondelet was not idle during the preparations for seizing his province. He began strengthening his forces and outposts for defence, and when the danger blew over he himself had contracted the Southwest-Empire fever. It appeared to him clear that he must attach a part of the American Republic or it would soon attach his province. He became, therefore, a more eager negotiator with the disgruntled Americans than Miro had been. He showed during the next decade that his Spanish provincial harp was one of a single string—division of the Union.

Wilkinson and Carondelet, after a couple of years of plotting without changing the situation a great deal, ran against further ill-fortune; for after long diplomatic fencing, a treaty between the United States and Spain was signed Oct. 20, 1795. This memorable treaty swept away the principal causes of complaint which had been alleged as

a basis of Southwestern disloyalty. It fixed the boundary between the United States and Florida and provided for the appointment of a joint commission to survey it. It was stipulated in the same treaty that the Mississippi River should be open to the navigation of both nations from its source to the sea, and that the people of the United States would be permitted to use the port of New Orleans as a place of deposit for their shipments.

But Governor Carondelet affected to take this treaty in a Pickwickian sense. He exhibited the true genius of his nationality by declaring it had been entered into by the King of Spain as a "court of finesse"—as a sop to the Americans till he could get rid of some of his pressing troubles nearer home, when he would assert his rights; that is, he would repudiate it. True it was the Spaniards had been forced to yield as the only means of pacifying the American government, which was forced to turn the screws on to pacify its Western Territories. And so Spain began to seek to evade carrying out its provisions. Instead of dismantling the posts along the Mississippi, Carondelet set about more strongly fortifying those at Natchez, Walnut Hill, and Baton Rouge. This no doubt was done with the connivance of Wilkinson, the claim being made that it was necessary for the protection of the Spanish subjects against Indians; when as a fact the Indians had been bribed to surround them, and so furnish the pretext.

Carondelet also had another pretext, and a truer argument. He said he had information that the British in Canada were again conspiring with certain Americans in the Mississippi River districts for the organization of an expedition to descend that river and capture New Orleans. This was a fact. Wilkinson had no doubt kept his Excellency informed as to the overtures of the British in this direction. Governor Blount, of Tennessee, was implicated, to his regret, as will be seen further on. And oddly enough it was an Englishman, one Power, though naturalized in Louisiana, whom Carondelet selected as an agent to send to the people of Kentucky and Tennessee with direct proposals to shift their allegiance from the Union. England, France, and Spain all considered the people of that region as infected with treason at this period, and each bid against the other to buy them.

Carondelet sent Power up the river to make his offer. About the only thing the people in that region had to complain of against their government now was the tax on whiskey, but that was a good deal—to them. Power went among them authorized to offer all kinds of commercial privileges and exemptions. In fact Carondelet promised them about everything he supposed they wanted. Power let it be known to the leading citizens that they could have \$100,000 and the backing of Spanish troops if they would revolt. Wilkinson had again got into his easy habit of acquiring military promotions—his intrigue with

Spain did not interfere in the least. He was now a major-general. Power had \$10,000 for him on this trip, which was secreted in barrels of sugar and bags of coffee. And he got it.

“The army is devoted to their talented and brilliant commander”—this is what Power said to Wilkinson, apparently ignorant of past transactions; “it requires but firmness and resolution on your part to render the Western people free and happy. Can a man of your superior genius prefer a subordinate and contracted position as the commander of the small and insignificant army of the United States to the glory of being the founder of an empire,—the liberator of so many millions of his countrymen,—the Washington of the West? Will not the people, at the slightest movement on your part, hail you as the chief of the new republic? Would not your reputation alone enable you to raise an army which France and Spain would help you pay? The eyes of the world are fixed on you . . . but should Spain be forced to execute the treaty of 1795, then the bright vision of independence for the Western people, and of the most exalted position and imperishable renown for yourself must forever vanish!”

Now that was just the kind of thing Wilkinson liked; it was as intoxicating to him as whiskey. But courage in the business had long since begun to fail him. The temper of the people had changed with the

opening of the river, and he could not lead them. He was aware that the suspicions of his government rested on him, and he desired to retain his command. He had for ten years been a recipient of favors from Spain, — money, privileges, tax exemptions, — but now he began to treat the Spaniards coolly, and advised them to accept the terms of the treaty. He also complained that the Spanish governors had divulged his correspondence with them; that he himself had burned the letters received, and destroyed the cipher used. Yet he had designs. He still hoped to be appointed Governor of the Natchez district. Then he would not lack an opportunity of realizing his long-cherished dream.

As for the correspondence, Miro sent copies of Wilkinson's letters, — all those in which he declared himself a good Spaniard, that he was devoting all his energies to effect a separation of Kentucky from the Union and its attachment to Louisiana, and in which he solicited and acknowledged the receipt of money for his traitorous work, — copies of all were sent to Spain. Most of the originals were in cipher. The copies are among the Madrid archives. Mr. Gayarré, the scholarly historian of Louisiana, states that some years ago copies of those documents were made at the request of the Louisiana legislature, under supervision of Romulus Saunders, United States minister to Spain; which copies are now in the office of the Secretary of State of Louisiana.

The British design referred to did not include a dismemberment of the Union. Along with the papers transferred to Congress in relation to the Spanish business, was a copy of a letter from William Blount, then Governor of the Southwest Territory, later a senator in Congress from Tennessee, addressed to one of the agents among the Cherokees, who sent it to the President. It was plain from this letter that Blount was engaged in an intrigue for joining the British in an expedition to capture New Orleans and the adjacent territory. Great Britain was to furnish the naval force, and Blount a regiment of frontiersmen and Indians. Hildreth gives a full report of this affair—the State historians of Tennessee barely allude to it.

Blount was badly involved in land speculations in Tennessee, and had plans for unloading on an English company. He feared they would be blocked by the transfer of Louisiana with the outlet of the Mississippi to France, as it was now rumored was coming about.

“Conceiving that it would be for the interest of the Western people, as well as for his own private benefit as a land speculátor, that Louisiana should pass into the hands of England, he relied upon his influence with the backwoodsmen of Tennessee and with Southern Indians, among whom he had long acted as agent, to raise the necessary force. He had engaged as his chief coöperator one Chisholm, a wild backwoodsman



GOVERNOR WILLIAM BLOUNT  
*Of Tennessee*



who hated the Spaniards because of his collisions with them; and in his letter, laid before Congress, he sought to engage the services of the Indian agent addressed. Upon this evidence the House voted to impeach Senator Blount, of which they sent up notice to the Senate. The Senate concurred and then required him to give security for his appearance in \$20,000."

The British minister, Mr. Liston, was asked for an explanation of the matter, and he acknowledged having given Chisholm letters to English statesmen, who rejected the proposal, as Liston declared. Anyway, there was a great outcry against the seduction of British gold, which has frequently been heard since.

The House having requested that till the impeachment should be decided Blount should be sequestered from his seat, the Senate, after hearing his counsel, proceeded to expel him. There was only one negative vote. His sureties had been his brother, also a congressman, and another member of the House, who surrendered him into custody and were discharged from their bond. But he was soon released on other surety to appear and answer to the charge at the next session.

The Blounts were full of Southwestern bravado. The brother had already immortalized himself in Congress by calling for the yeas and nays on the complimentary address to Washington, and sent a challenge to Thatcher of Boston who had retorted, and who declined it. Hildreth

says Congressman Blount acted in this affair the backwoods bully and blackguard.

At the next session, Senator Blount not appearing, the sergeant-at-arms of the Senate, James Mathers, went to Knoxville to arrest him and take him to Philadelphia. After service of process upon Blount the sergeant-at-arms found it impossible to take him along. Blount refused to go, and everybody sided with him. Mathers found them all polite, and was treated more than civilly. He even became for several days Blount's guest, and was entertained by the State authorities. Finally he issued summons for a posse to assist him. Not a man responded. He appealed to the United States marshal of the district, but that official modestly declared he had no influence in the community. It looked very much as if, however guilty the senator had been, they were all of his plane of morals. So Mathers went back to Philadelphia without his quarry.

The impeachment trial in the Senate resulted in a dismissal of the proceedings on the argument that Blount was no longer a senator, having been expelled, and that he should enjoy the right of a trial by jury in the State or district where the alleged crime had been committed. But in the House the case dragged through the whole session. Every obstacle was raised by members who feared such a precedent, perhaps for personal reasons. Out of the affair grew several disgraceful broils in the House.

Lyon, a Southern member, taking offence at a fancied insult by Griswold, of Connecticut, spat in his face. Next day Griswold pounced upon Lyon in his seat and gave him a beating with a cane. Then they clinched and went to the floor, where they punched and gouged and choked each other. Griswold landed topside of his antagonist, and at length was dragged off. Then the Speaker, who had looked on silently with the air of a referee at a Tennessee dog-fight, called the House to order.

Some strait-laced member tried to cast a shadow over the entertainment by moving to expel the combatants, but it was lost, as was also a resolution of censure. It had been too diverting an incident.

To lend greater piquancy to the impeachment matter, a senator of the legislature of Tennessee, which assembled about the same time, resigned in favor of Blount, who was then elected president of the State senate by a unanimous vote. And he filled that office while his trial proceeded in Congress. The people did not consider the act of which he was accused a punishable crime. The prosecution popularized him, and he would have been elected Governor but for his early death. The whole episode forcibly illustrates the temper and ideas of the Southwestern people at that time.

Blount's land "speculations" were typical. For decades the principal medium of tricky financial schemes throughout the West and South was land. For years there were

practically no preëmption laws, and the first acts of Congress designed to protect the bona fide settler in his holdings, and prevent speculative monopolies of the public domain, fell far short of serving the purpose efficiently. The preëmption bill which was passed during the Jackson regime improved things, but no law has ever been devised to stop effectually the speculative pirates. During the whole development of the country the land-shark has been a pest and an object of hatred to the home-makers. He has robbed them without mercy. His wiles were terror and mystery to the honest settler, who not infrequently undertook to clear them away with his shot-gun. In the early decades land-robbery was a fruitful source of violence, and at the bottom of most litigation.

An intelligent traveller through the Southwest as late as 1834, explained in some detail some of the tricks of land-grabbing. After surveying the country into sections, land offices were established and sales advertised at certain times, the most desirable lands to go to the highest bidder. What remained unsold for want of bidders was open to be entered at the minimum price of \$1.25 an acre. Nothing, apparently, could be fairer; but sharp practice under the system was easy and constant. The settler would choose his section, build a cabin, make a clearing, plant a crop, and prepare to bid in his tract on sales-day. By conniving with the politicians and "fixing" things with

the land agent, the "speculators" would go to such settlers and tell them they were going to bid against them for their lands. The pioneer had little money. He had only the alternative of abandoning his tract or of making a ruinous compromise. The latter was often done by arranging to let the sharks take the title from the government, the settler to get title from them. Instead of getting their farms for the minimum government price, they would have to pay several times the amount in this way, and that usually meant securing the purchase money by a mortgage. "Thus is the once cheerful settler weighed down with a heavy debt that presses upon him and converts him into a slave to a set of unprincipled harpies."

But that was not the most atrocious operation. If the settler refused to compromise, the speculator outbid him. Under an apparently just regulation, if the price bid was not paid within a certain number of hours, the fact was stated at the opening of the sale the next morning, and the sale declared void. The settler, confident that the bidder against him would not put up the money, would wait for this. When the list of defalcations was read, "he is overjoyed to find his own section is among the lot, goes to the clerk as soon as the register is open, and directs his name to be put down as the purchaser at the minimum price of \$1.25 an acre," which that individual is bound to do,

the tract remaining unsold by the defalcation. The clerk would inform him, however, that another person had just entered his name for that parcel. The deluded and unfortunate home-maker saw that the clerk was a confederate of the sharpers, and that he was truly "buncoed," without benefit either of law or clergy. The writer quoted adds: "These vile transactions have been repeated too often, and in some instances the names of individuals have been coupled with them that ought to have been free from every taint of suspicion."

But these were mere picayune enterprises compared to some of the earlier days, when the land-jobbers worked in companies. They operated frequently on the basis of grants. The scope and possibilities of some of the pioneer schemes were enough to make the most ambitious real estate dealer of to-day feel like hiding his diminished head. It is worth while pausing to survey one or two of them. The whole object and ambition of the adventurers under review hinged on land-grabbing.

Georgia claimed, under a charter from Charles II, all the territory from Savannah to the Mississippi between the thirty-first and thirty-fifth degrees of latitude. As early as 1783 she created the county of Bourbon — a territory somewhat smaller than Russia — including the settlements along the Mississippi. It indicates the vast assumption of State sovereignty when Governor Telfair approved an act of the general

assembly authorizing the conditional sale of the great domain. Coincident with this act the South Carolina Yazoo Company was organized. Georgia sold to this company five million acres in the Mississippi territory for \$60,000. Following hard after was the Virginia Yazoo Company, to which was sold seven million acres for \$93,000. Next came the Tennessee Company, which got an allotment of three million five hundred thousand acres in northern Alabama for \$46,000. To be sure, Spain claimed this territory—or at least the most of it—by conquest from England made under young Galvez during the American Revolution, and that nation and the United States were then negotiating to settle the disputed question of boundaries; but that did not deter Georgia from going ahead as if she were a separate world power. It was understood that the Indians were to be dispossessed. Because of these “extraordinary sales,” as the good Alabama historian, Pickett, calls them, there seemed to be impending a many-cornered collision between all the powers concerned. It all occurring in the days of rugged honesty, there is no room for suspicion, of course, that the members of the legislature or his Excellency the Governor had any other interest in the business than the promotion of civilization.

Washington failed to appreciate the blessings latent in the sales, and unfeelingly put his veto on them by

proclamation. But the Tennessee Company heeded it not. They built a blockhouse on Muscle Shoals Island, in the Tennessee River, and other strongholds, which they placed in command of one Zachariah Coxe, and prepared to sell off their lands to immigrants. But the audacious company overleaped itself. The government sent orders to Governor Blount to stop the proceeding; and Blount, being interested in other land schemes, very willingly complied. He organized the Cherokee Indians, already complainants against the intruders, burnt the blockhouse, and drove Coxe and his speculators out.

The South Carolina Yazoo Company had all the assurance its name suggests. This corporation raised troops in Kentucky, issued military commissions, and attempted to take the Natchez country from the Spaniards regardless of any action of government. It was perhaps as bold a movement as any corporation ever attempted on this continent. The head and front of the pushing concern was a Doctor O'Fallon, and his actions seemed to indicate that he had ideas of an independent government. But the Spaniards made a loud protest to the Federal government, and by express orders of the President the cheeky O'Fallon was arrested. That put an end to the scheme. The companies defaulted on payments,—the promoters were not so innocent as to pay for anything they could not sell,—and the grants were declared void. On account of these transactions, Washington was abused some more

as a tyrant, mostly by people who had lost money fitting out intended expeditions to the speculative promised lands.

But in 1795 occurred the real, simon-pure Yazoo operation. The government decided that the districts involved in the old grants in right appertained to Georgia; but, of course, that did not imply the right of that commonwealth to make treaties and act as a distinct national power. However, as soon as the terms of the treaty between the United States and Spain were announced, her real estate business took another boom. The Georgia Company was organized. For \$250,000 this company bought what now constitutes forty-one counties in Alabama and Mississippi. Then came the Georgia-Mississippi Company, and for \$150,000 bought what is now thirty-four counties, and later a similar tract for \$35,000. The Tennessee Company — probably a reorganization of the old concern of that name — took some thirteen counties for \$60,000. These transactions totalled twenty-one million five hundred thousand acres for about \$500,000. The purchasing companies, under the terms agreed upon, paid down one-fifth of the purchase price and secured titles.

The annals of the period state that there was a good deal of excitement in the Georgia legislature when the acts were passed, and from the hints given therein it may be understood that "modern methods" in financial legislation were highly developed even then. But a great and menacing howl went up from the people, — the proletariat

that is always "heading in" to make trouble. All over the States involved the protests rumbled and roared, till the Yazoo fairly faltered in its course. A great convention was held at Louisville (Ga.) which many prominent men attended, and where hundreds of petitions were read charging vast fraud and conspiracy on the part of legislators and State officials. But in the face of all this, the corporations came forward and made payment in full for the lands.

Washington was astounded. Congress passed a resolution instructing the attorney-general to investigate the titles which the companies had got. However, that proved unnecessary. Before the chief law officer of the government got around to his work, the people of Georgia had elected a new legislature and governor. They "turned the rascals out." Everybody went to Louisville again and paraded in a great procession. The "Yazoo act" was expunged from the records and, as the history runs, the bill itself was consumed in the public square by fire from heaven. This celestial caloric was obtained by using a sunglass on the document.

And so, what was perhaps the most stupendous land-grab in the history of the States was frustrated by popular determination; but many — hundreds, it is stated — had already moved to the lands, and the losses they sustained, together with all the litigation and vexation that resulted, must have been very serious. As for the State itself, the Federal government settled the matter with Georgia by

paying her \$1,250,000 for the whole tract. In this district the United States subsequently recognized all prior Spanish and British grants, but not the Yazoo claims. After this adjustment the people were impatient for the survey of the boundary line, as provided for in the Spanish-American treaty. In fact, it was stipulated that commissioners should attend to this within six months after the ratification of the treaty.

The stubbornness of Carondelet, before mentioned, delayed the prosecution of the survey. Colonel Andrew Ellicott, on the part of the United States, and Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, on the part of Spain, were entrusted with the important undertaking. In spite of Spanish procrastination Ellicott ran up the American flag at Natchez. Gayoso, when called on, always pleaded *mañana*. He seems to have been a foolish person, for when the aroused Americans finally threatened an invasion, he issued a proclamation asking them to submit to the Spanish rule until all differences could be settled. But at last he got around to it, and the work proceeded. In this instance the threats of the settlers against the Spaniards were provoked, although there was hardly any time, from the War of Independence to the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, that the Americans were not rudely, violently trespassing on Spanish or Mexican territory, and without just provocation seeking in some way or other to despoil the inhabitants.

While he was a renegade and not an American citizen, no story of such aggressions should be told without including mention of that rare and interesting rascallion, William Augustus Bowles. A native of Maryland, he ran away and enlisted in the British army at fourteen. After a year's service against his countrymen, he sailed as ensign with a regiment to Jamaica and thence to Pensacola (1777). Growing impudent, he was degraded; so he flung his uniform into the sea and fled to the Indians. On the Tallapoosa he married the daughter of a chief, and acquired a high and bad influence over the red men. He led a band of Creeks to aid General Campbell against the Spaniards, when the latter made their brilliant campaign under Galvez.

Then Bowles broke away from savage life and went to New York. He was a good deal of a genius; became an actor, was also a portrait painter, and studied languages. He drifted on the waves of circumstances to the Bahamas, and ingratiated himself with the Governor, Lord Dunmore, who had just seized a schooner with six thousand piastres belonging to Panton and Leslie, a Georgia firm, as contraband. The war being over, a British court ordered the schooner given back. This put Dunmore in high dudgeon. He previously had a grudge against Panton, and he engaged Bowles to return to Georgia and work vengeance on him and his partners. Bowles soon was a sworn enemy of Panton, McGillivray, the Scotch, French, and all other

kinds of Georgians. They ran him out, but with the help of Dunmore he organized a company of Indians for the nominal purpose of aiding them against aggression, but really to prey on the Spaniards in the interest of England. In this he had British support.

Soon he began pirating on Panton's vessels, captured several, ran them up the bayous, and indulged in riotous luxury. From the schooners he got liquors, provisions, and other Georgia products, with which he debauched his followers and set up a revelry in the forests that startled the panthers. He was joined by one Willbanks, a refugee Tory from New York, and they pretended to have possession of the country for the English. Finally, McGillivray captured Bowles, put him in chains, and sent him to Madrid. There he landed in a grewsome prison, dank and grim and noisome as centuries could make it, with the Spaniards very much against him. It looked to be the sunset of opportunity for Bowles.

But when Colonel Ellicott, after vicissitudes by river and wild, having his horses stolen by savages and being himself harshly threatened, finished running the line between Spanish and American possessions and reached the sea at Fox Point, he found a wrecked schooner of the British navy, and with its outfit was Bowles — General Bowles, so please you, by British commission. This seemed very odd, remembering that the dare-devil had been planted away in a Spanish dungeon a couple of years before.

This is the way it happened. It came to the ears of his most Christian Majesty, the King, that the daring pirate they had in the vault was a man of great influence among the Florida Indians, especially the Creeks. Then it occurred to the King that the desperate foe in captivity might be conciliated and turned to great advantage. So he offered him a military title and big pay to return to Florida in the Spanish service, and contribute to strengthening the province by organizing the red warriors. But Bowles was sulky, and would not listen to it. The King, rather pleased at the spirit of the prisoner, then ordered that he be transferred from the dungeon to well-furnished apartments, provided with servants, and served with luxuries, with the idea of softening his rancor and winning him over. That seemed to Bowles too good to relinquish at once, so he continued to hold out, and to receive more tempting offers. "Perhaps they'll want to make me prime minister pretty soon," said Bowles ; and he tippled again, set those around him in a roar with mimicry and spicy jokes, and still swore hatred to the Spanish.

After this had gone on for a while Bowles was thinking it about time to relent, when the guards came in with the shackles one day and fastened him up again. He had played his game too far ; all bids had been withdrawn ; and Bowles was hustled on board a prison ship, chained in, and ticketed for Manila.

No doubt the man had really captivated some of the

Spaniards. Early writers assert that he had "a winning address and gentleness of mien which did not exclude, when occasion required it, the imposing and stern aspect of command. His was the sweetest of smiles, femininely beautiful, and indicative of the bubbling well of kindness within ; with the dark eyebrow that shaded at times the glance of fire. He was one of those impassioned beings, 'demons in act, but gods at least in face,' whom Byron delighted to paint."

All the same, he was a bold, dangerous man ; and three nations knew it. He was taken to the Philippines, kept there some months, and was being returned for some purpose when he escaped at Ascension Island and made his way to London. He must have displayed his femininely beautiful smile quite as effectively here as at Madrid, for Pitt and the Duke of Portland took him up, listened to the story of his prowess among the Indians, and his undying hate for Spain. He was the kind they needed at that date, so they commissioned him a brigadier, supplied him with money, and started him back to America to help worry their enemies on sea and land.

He sailed for the big gulf, and preyed on the commerce of both Spain and Georgia. His ship had just been stranded by a hurricane when Ellicott came along. Bowles invited him to the wreck and got assistance from him, in return for which he gave the colonel a lot of charts and maps of Florida navigation. The two were good

fellows together ; but Bowles still swore vengeance on both America and Spain.

From here Bowles advanced inland at the head of a party of Indians, captured the fort at St. Marks, plundered his old friend Panton's store, and subscribed himself "General William Augustus Bowles, director of the affairs of the Creek nation." But there was an American Colonel Hawkins who was out after him with a mixed troop of Americans and Spaniards, and who offered a reward for his capture. This had its influence on Bowles's friends, the Indians. They got up a great feast at Tuskegee, "where the old French Fort Tolouse stood," and Bowles and the Miccasoochy chiefs attended. When the orgy was deep, concealed Indians seized and pinioned Bowles, took him down the river, and camped with a guard over him. Even yet he had a chance. The guards fell asleep, Bowles gnawed his ropes off, got into the canoe, paddled noiselessly across to a canebrake, and escaped. But the Indians followed at daybreak, found the canoe, and corralled him in the swamp. They conveyed him, for further reward, to Mobile. He was now nearing the end of his career. From Mobile he was sent to Havana, where he was immured in a dungeon of historic Morro castle, where he was kept several years, until he died.

## CHAPTER IV

*Wilkinson and Burr — Great Panic and Little Danger — Burr's Arrest  
— Wilkinson's Baseness — The Story of Madeline.*



IN 1798, the organization of the army of the United States was completed, and the next year Wilkinson was created a major-general. The threatened rupture between France and this country had something to do with effecting his promotion. It is reported that Hamilton presented the

request to Washington, the general-in-chief, at the same time acknowledging there was some doubt entertained of the candidate ; that his character was not above criticism on more than one count, but that he was a man of more than ordinary talent. He was a soldier of experience

who would naturally find it to his interest to deserve favors of the government "while he would be apt to become disgusted if neglected, and through disgust may be rendered really what he is now only suspected to be."

Washington took the same view of the case, and the suspect got his appointment to high command. It was in fact a bribe for his future loyalty or a reward for his past treason, as one may look at it. A few short years before he had written to a Spanish governor: "In order to aid the favorable disposition of Providence, to foment the suspicions and feelings of distrust already existing here [Kentucky], and influence the animosity between the Eastern and Western States, Spain must resort to every artifice and other means which may be in her power. . . . I consider it as profoundly judicious; and I am of opinion that it ought to be renewed and vigorously carried on until its object be attained, cost what it may."

But his ideas had changed with the change in his fortunes and with the turn of the great political wheel in which he was a spoke. With the beginning of a new century Spain's grasp on Louisiana and Florida was nerveless, and it was known that the former was to be re-ceded to France. Plotting with her governors was now useless. It was no longer possible for an independent nation to be formed through any such conspiracy; and yet he believed that the trend of events was favorable to a great and

independent power in the Southwest. His vision of empire had in reality expanded.

Digression has been made to relate the facts of other seditious enterprises that were attempted during the years that Wilkinson pursued his secret negotiations with the Spaniards, and although others still were set on foot before the finish of his career in this region, it will appear a more continuous narrative to round out the recital of his infamy and have done with it.

The agitation and discontent throughout the Southwestern Territories and States of the Union late in the eighteenth century created in many ambitious men a passion for conquest—for the forcible appropriation of territory that did not belong to them,—which did not subside when the causes of disloyal mutterings had been removed. A large proportion of the population was of the restless, migratory spirit. If no real cause for dissatisfaction with their present situation existed, they imagined one. They did not like to feel the authority of any kind of government. The excise, or internal revenue tax on whiskey, was particularly obnoxious to them. Government was all right in some sort of self-sustaining way to fight off other nations and chastise the Indians, but beyond those functions it was not only superfluous, it was an exasperating nuisance.

So there was a longing for other lands. They wanted to try another experiment at nation-making. They

looked beyond the great river to Louisiana, beyond Louisiana to Texas, beyond Texas to Mexico. The turmoil in Mexico gave them the feeling that Spanish control of that country would not last long, and that it would not require the aid of a very strong military force to make the Mexicans independent, nor a much stronger force to subjugate that country afterwards. The Spaniards they hated; for the Mexicans they had contempt.

Prior to the purchase of Louisiana, going back several years, the newspapers throughout the United States frequently published articles discussing the possible conquest of Mexico. Those published west of the mountain ranges treated the subject the most seriously. During the exasperation arising from the Florida boundary survey, a movement against Mexico was openly advocated, just as, some years later, when there was contention over the Louisiana-Texas boundary, the excitement led to marauding expeditions.

In 1799, Louis de Peñalvert y Cardenas, Bishop of Louisiana, in a report said: "The emigration from the Western part of the United States and the toleration of our Government have introduced into this colony a gang of adventurers who have no religion and acknowledge no God; and they have made much worse the morals of our people. . . . They employ Indians on their farms, and have frequent intercourse and

conversation with them, and impress their minds with pernicious maxims in harmony with their own restless and ambitious tempers; this with the customs of their own Western countrymen, who are in the habit of saying to such of their boys as are distinguished for a robust frame, whilst patting them on the shoulder, 'you will be the man to go to Mexico.'"

The force of this indictment depends, of course, upon what the Bishop would construe as acknowledging God; and he may have had the narrowest orthodox notions of his church as to that. Nevertheless, there is abundance of evidence from sources that cannot be suspected of any prejudice, that his characterization was in the main true to the life. Making all reasonable allowance for the morals and manners of a border people, owing to their isolation, their privations, and the harsh influences surrounding them, it must be recognized that a large proportion of the pioneers — the real movers and way-blazers — of the early Southwest was of a pretty low and desperate kind of humanity. The unquestioned tales of their slovenliness, their indifference to degraded environment, their low plane of morals, their cruelty, and their besotted bigotry stamp them as undoubtedly the least creditable of any frontier people in any period of our country's development. Testimony to this is given, for instance, by the itinerant revivalist preacher, Lorenzo Dow, who "toured"

as far as the Mississippi in 1803, and into Louisiana the following two or three years. He had encountered some pretty low strata of society in various places, both here and abroad, for those were the layers he sought to leaven with the bacteria of righteousness; but when he got down among the Mississippi settlements, Lorenzo cried to the good Lord for extra support. He declared there were not three Christians in Natchez, meaning the whole district. Up to 1803 no Protestant preacher had been heard in that region.

Governor Claiborne, the first American Governor of Louisiana, complained, in 1805, of the tough character of the immigration into that State from east of the Mississippi,—degenerate characters who thrived on lawlessness, or at least were always ready to encourage it. Even the most intelligent of them caused him a great deal of trouble. They played a disgraceful part by encouraging distrust of and prejudice against the American authority. The “ancient inhabitants” of Louisiana, as the old-time Spanish subjects were called—mostly French and Spaniards—had long heard preached the doctrine that a republican form of government could not long exist over an extensive territory, and that the United States must limit their possessions to the Mississippi. They were a much more amiable and peace-loving people than the turbulent Americans, but the newly imposed American laws and

American officialism were to them complicated and irksome, and they hoped for an early reversion to the old rule. And there were American citizens so contemptible as to encourage them in order to gain their own petty political or financial advantage.

Wilkinson knew all the conditions, political and otherwise, throughout the region ; he was well acquainted with the quality and temperament of the people. As the head of the army of the Southern District he could have done much toward conciliating them, encouraging patience with and respect for the government, and discouraging indifference to the laws. But his influence was never in the right direction ; his aims were in conflict with the authority he exercised, and his contemplated methods of realizing them depended upon lawless daring. Besides, his example of habits was in keeping with his greater offences. In addition to his constant gambling, he drank to excess.

Lausat, the agent sent by France to attend to the formal delivery of Louisiana to the United States after the purchase, was a man of shrewd observation. The new responsibility the Americans had undertaken, and the instruments they were employing to handle them with, interested him. In a despatch to one of the French ministers he expressed his opinions of Claiborne and Wilkinson : "The second has been long known here in the most unfavorable manner. He is a rattle-headed fellow,

full of odd fantasies. He is frequently drunk, and has committed a hundred inconsistent and impertinent acts." And Lausat knew nothing of his crimes.

From now on, to the time of his removal from this theatre of his "impertinent acts," Wilkinson's plottings must be considered in connection with those of Aaron Burr. It is not proposed herein to give many details of the oft-recited story of Burr's designs on the Southwest, and the almost farcical movement he inaugurated to carry them out. The case has been one of such historical prominence and such constant allusion that it has completely overshadowed all other undertakings of similar aim, and crowded them into remote corners of unfamiliar history. Yet the Burr enterprise cannot be ignored.

It is pretty reliable history that, before Burr retired from the office of Vice-President, he had a confidential conference with Mr. Merry, the British minister then at our capital, in which he offered his services to Great Britain "in any manner in which they may see fit to employ him," as Mr. Merry wrote his Minister of State. Although England did not then consider us quite a full-fledged nation, she did not appear to hold it compatible with her dignity to allow her representative to plot with Mr. Burr; and so the latter got no employment of her "in any manner."

But while the subject was still remembered, Burr's accomplice, Williamson, in London got an audience with

Pitt and Melville, and represented to them how they could deal the young republic a staggering blow by financing Burr's proposed expedition, which, among other grand things, was intended to detach the Southwestern States from the Union. Burr modestly requested of them the loan of only half a million dollars, three ships of the line, and a few frigates; the money to be paid over in trust to John Barclay of Philadelphia and Daniel Clark of New Orleans.

Now, that immediately connects Burr's plans with Wilkinson, for Daniel Clark had been Wilkinson's agent and spy at New Orleans from the days of his first negotiations with Miro. Daniel Clark, in 1799, had inherited a large fortune from an uncle who had been a successful merchant and land dealer at the Southern metropolis. And, we may note, he is that Daniel Clark who was the father of Myra Clark Gaines, whose historic lawsuit for the possession of the vast estate he left forms perhaps the most romance-like chapter of American litigation.

The British statesmen declined to "grubstake" Burr, so to speak, and the latter, disappointed and always in need of money, concocted a most disgraceful scheme of having his own secret communications with the Englishmen "tipped off" to the Spanish minister, with an offer to sell him full information of the alleged "plottings of Great Britain with a high official of the United States government against the Spanish possessions." Into this

despicable game of squeeze he inveigled ex-United States Senator Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey, a man of ancestry and high respectability, who approached Minister Yruzo with the proposition, and actually got a few thousand dollars from him on the most pitiful confidence game that men of prominence ever stooped to.

It would seem that very soon after these first (and futile) efforts, Burr took Wilkinson into his schemes. Or it may be that Wilkinson took Burr in. At any rate, they coupled their intriguing issues. One thing is certain — Wilkinson had for a long time had a definite plan; Burr for a long time had not. As a real fact, it is altogether doubtful, and the ablest commentators on his case so express themselves, whether Burr ever had a well-defined, positive plan. He talked all kinds of things at different times and places; to each one he hoped to win, in a strain he thought most likely to catch the fancy of the listener. He was disgruntled and out of harmony with society, an adventurer determined to make some kind of brilliant stroke.

In the collusion of the two arch-plotters Wilkinson was to be second to Burr in the empire they were to establish. But first, Burr was going to colonize the grant of land which Baron Bastrop claimed to have received from Spain, situated in Louisiana. That was to be the nucleus. In the meantime the general was to dispose the military forces under his command so that they could be counted

on as a powerful aid, or else be incapable of being used against them. But it was not a partnership to hold well. It was not in Wilkinson to play second villain to anybody, — he was too accomplished a performer in that role himself. And besides, it was the man's chief trait to play false to everybody. The Southwest, broad as it was, was yet too narrow a field for two such past-masters in conspiracy. Jealousy seized on Wilkinson, and soon the *entente* began to cool.

Says one author (Powell): "During this episode the one most infinitesimally contemptible character did not prove to be Burr, but Wilkinson. The senior major-general of the United States, he had been a pensioner of Spain for twenty years, acting as spy and traitor. That he should also have been an accomplice of Burr's was a bagatelle. It is not at all unlikely that he had acted for Spain all along, drawing Burr on to break up the Union; but when Burr's schemes reached out to attack Mexico, his Spanish masters were convinced the States would be less dangerous to them than Burr would be. Then their contemptible tool denounced his ally to our government, making good his own safety by playing the natural part of informer and witness. . . . The scoundrel posed as the saviour of the Union, held on to his \$2000 a year from the Spanish King, secured immunity from his own double treason, and stood on the witness block to try to get Burr hanged."

But Wilkinson's defection did not deter Burr, who by that time had coddled up to Blennerhasset and was building flatboats on the Ohio. How they created a flotilla, collected arms, provisions, farm implements, and enrolled a company of men and boys; how they started, were stopped on the way when Blennerhasset got frightened and backed out; how Burr continued on till he was arrested down on the Mississippi, — all are familiar facts.

The mystery surrounding Burr's movements, and the dislike that he had incurred, gave the expedition an importance that it did not deserve. In the same way they greatly exaggerated the danger from Burr's treason. John Adams always belittled it; and it is true beyond question that the menace to the Union was many times greater at the time of the Genet excitement, or even from the plottings of Wilkinson while the Western people were aflame with anger because the navigation of the Mississippi was denied them, than it was from this puny movement.

Calmly considered, it is laughable, the panic which Burr's approach caused in Mississippi. Cowles Mead, the acting Governor, a talkative and excitable man, was so alarmed that he ordered the entire State militia, five regiments, under arms. He was even more frightened than Wilkinson professed to be over in Louisiana. He sent despatches proclaiming "the fate of the country may depend on my movements now."

With the same show of alarm, Wilkinson, who was in Western Louisiana where the Mexicans under Herrera were threatening trouble over the Texas boundary dispute, talked of Burr's mightiness. It had looked very much as if there would be a battle. Herrera was with his troops on the west bank of the Sabine, and Wilkinson on the east bank. While in this position Wilkinson received a letter from Burr stating that the latter had started his expedition, and suggesting that Wilkinson had better reconsider and join him. He said he intended seizing Baton Rouge as a preliminary measure. Wilkinson took two weeks to consider the matter. Then he sent the letter to Washington and denounced Burr. Having taken ample time to think it over he now concluded that a great danger was impending. The first thing he did was to make overtures to Herrera, who was awaiting an attack, for an armistice. He suggested that, as the Mexicans claimed the Sabine as the boundary and the Americans the Nuecés, the country between the two should be declared neutral ground, not to be occupied by either Mexicans or Americans, until the whole question should be settled by treaty. Herrera agreed, and both armies drew off.

Now Wilkinson was free to protect his beloved country against the treasonable attack of his late friend Burr. He sent word to Commodore Shaw and

had him concentrate eight war vessels, fifty guns, at New Orleans to meet Aaron's terrible "flotilla." He began to mobilize his troops near that city, and pretended to discover a seething hotbed of treason there. He sent a request to Governor Claiborne to declare martial law, and advised the Governor to authorize him, Wilkinson, "to repress the seditious and arrest the disaffected; to call the resources of the city into active operation. The defects of my force may expose me to be overwhelmed by numbers . . . because you could not for a moment withstand the desperation and numbers opposed to you; and the brigands, provoked by the opposition, might resort to the dreadful expedient of exciting a revolt of the negroes. If we divide our forces, we shall be beaten in detail!"

Later he wrote Claiborne that he had received intelligence which led him to believe that Burr would reach Natchez about Dec. 20 (1806) with two thousand men, and added that he feared he, Wilkinson, had been betrayed "by Burr and his rebellious bands." According to the doughty commander, it was a situation that called for the military genius of a Cæsar and the swift strokes of a Napoleon to save the nation.

Governor Claiborne did not quite lose his head. He refused to proclaim martial law; but the merchants of New Orleans were affected with the silly alarm and began subscriptions for supplying clothes and arms to



GOVERNOR WILLIAM C. C. CLAIBORNE  
*Of Louisiana*



the volunteers. These volunteers were first enlisted for the emergency, but Wilkinson entered objection to this, and demanded that they be enlisted for six months. He also made a vigorous demand for an embargo for six months on river traffic, up the river or to the gulf. But the men would not enlist for six months, and the business men and the Governor objected to the embargo. The general then wanted Claiborne to order an impressment, and conducted himself like a scared fool or a knave, inditing florid and bombastic letters about having put his life and character in opposition to the flagitious enterprises of Burr.

What he wanted six months' enlistments for, or a tight embargo on river commerce, it is impossible to explain on any other theory than that he had designs of putting his own ulterior schemes into operation, and perhaps crush Burr at the same stroke. That would appear like a mad attempt, but his whole conduct was equally as crazy.

To add to the gaiety of the farce, Mead, the before-mentioned Mississippian who was trying to give an imitation of a governor, and doing it most ridiculously, sent out a screech like a startled jackdaw for help in his hour of terror. "We want arms and ammunition! We have men, but they are badly provided. I can only stand and make the fight of Leonidas! Burr may come, and he is no doubt desperate, but

treason is seldom associated with generous courage or real bravery. . . . If I stop Burr, this may hold the general (Wilkinson) in allegiance to the United States. But if Burr passes this territory with two thousand men, I have no doubt that the general will be your worst enemy. Be on your guard against the wily general! He is not much better than Catiline. Consider him a traitor, and act as if certain thereof! You may save yourself by it!"

Grotesque as this appeal is, it gives a clear understanding of what estimate Wilkinson was held in by the official, — an estimate that doubtless was shared by many other men in the Mississippi region.

Wilkinson, being unable to force Claiborne, began to act independently of him. The next thing he did was the climax of his absurdity. There was a British squadron of a few vessels resting idly under the pleasant winter sun at Jamaica. Admiral Drake was in command. To him Wilkinson despatched a military messenger, Lieutenant Swan, with a screed informing the admiral of Burr's mighty plans, and of the (alleged) circulation of a report that the coöperation of a British naval armament had been either promised or applied for, and warning him and all officers in the British navy that their interference, or any coöperation on their part, would be considered as highly injurious to the United States, and as affecting the present amicable relations between the two nations. He

hoped the British Governor at Jamaica would not only refrain from such coöperation, but would prevent any and all individuals from affording aid to the conspirators, — and so on.

The admiral paused from a rum julep to read, and then took another, and read again. Still it did not appear at all clear to him.

“What in Neptune is it all about?” he wanted to know. He called the captains and lieutenants, and the private secretary took a brace in his mental jib and tried to interpret the riddle. Then the admiral replied that from the style and manner in which the communication had been made he hardly knew how to answer it. But he assured General Wilkinson that British ships of war would not be employed in any improper service.

Up to this point Wilkinson’s furioso buffoonery did not hurt much, but now he took to arbitrarily arresting citizens whom he pretended to suspect of complicity in Burr’s plans, and to resisting habeas corpus writs. He established practically a dictatorship. One superior judge resigned. Claiborne, while not approving Wilkinson’s usurpation of power, admitted that there were a good many of the inhabitants, both among the “ancient” Louisianians and the recent American comers, who he believed would cordially have supported Burr, — just as Wilkinson was convinced, no doubt, that they would support him as soon as he was able to effect a *coup*.

Among those whom Wilkinson arrested was the American veteran General Adair, and also Doctor Eric Bollman, who had achieved almost worldwide notoriety through his daring attempt to liberate Lafayette from the Austrian prison of Olmütz.

Yet on came Burr with the heralded mighty sweep of his flotilla legion, and mightier was the commotion of military preparation to save the nation, — five regiments in Mississippi, eight ships of war in front of New Orleans, a thousand volunteer troops under arms, and several hundred regulars which Wilkinson had hurried forward from different posts. And now one morning the militia officers on the lookout at Natchez saw something suspicious-looking lying along the shore, and, taking a squad of troopers, they went over and put it under arrest. It was Burr's flotilla of destruction — nine small flatboats and less than a hundred men; some reports say only sixty. And that was all there was of it. The terrorists were mostly young fellows, mere boys, — armed, it is true, but nobody went anywhere without arms in that region and those days. Many of the crew did not even know where they were bound or what their object was.

When Burr was placed under arrest for his armed invasion, he asked if his outfit looked warlike or fit for conquest; and no one could say that it did. But of course they made no allowance for that. And "General" Mead never got through telling of his valiant capture of Burr.

He suffered from chronic vanity, and as he grew old it is said he really persuaded himself that he "saved the nation." Wilkinson, after all his terrible bluster, had no hand in it, and the whole proceeding left him a good deal in the light of a picturesque buffoon. He had some trouble squaring himself for his outrageous exercise of authority, and the trial of Burr, against whom he was one of the principal witnesses, did not tend to allay the ill report of him that had been spreading throughout the country.

That he had connived with Burr up to almost the last hour is fully proved. He wrote to Daniel Clark, his former agent, who had now become a territorial member of Congress, that "that great and honest man [Burr] will communicate to you many things improper to letter, which he would not say to another." It was illustrated in the trial of Burr, the details of which are common history, as well as in the trial of Wilkinson which followed two years later, that the charges may be proved against the accused without securing a conviction. Burr was guilty. He had openly talked treason for years. It does not matter that he set about it with pitifully inadequate facilities for putting his mixed and ill-defined designs into execution, nor that he did not for a moment put the government in jeopardy. At an earlier date, when the people of the region were in a seditious mood, he no doubt would have been received by thousands with acclaim, and he might at that period

have made a change in the map. That he was acquitted was just as well. To have hanged him would have been to punish one man for treason when it was well known that a thousand had been guilty of the same crime without any attempt at punishing them. And besides, the treasonable sentiment was becoming outgrown.

It is hard to express as charitable a thought for Wilkinson, who did his best to secure the hanging of his friend and accomplice. But that was only meanness. A swift review of the crimes and transgressions of the man, the revelry of treason that he kept up for years, and the despicable trickery which he practised, damns him as utterly vile.

He was not an unworthy accomplice of Aaron Burr. They had many qualities in common. Both were of agreeable presence, of good voice, and easy command of words. Both could talk convincingly, and one was about as adept at mystifying or misleading as the other. But Wilkinson, much more than his more distinguished rival in guile, was given to protesting his own virtues, especially his patriotism and love of honor.

"Yet he probably was as utterly destitute of all real honor," says T. M. Green, "as venal, as dishonest, as faithless as any man that ever lived. His selfishness was supreme and his self-indulgence boundless, while his knowledge of all that is mean and corrupt in mankind seemed intuitive. With an ambition that was at once vaulting

and ever restless, and a vanity that was immeasurable, to gratify the one and to offer incense to the other he did not scruple to pander to the vices of his fellows, to excite their cupidity, and to tempt them to treason."

A pretty brutal indictment, it may be said ; but it is by a writer who studied deeply and critically the circumstances of his career, as well as the inner history of the intrigues and treasonable movements of the Southwest during the early period.

When Wilkinson came to Kentucky there was, among other agitations, that to separate the district from Virginia. He wrote a disrespectful address, of the spirit to make trouble, and it was sent to the Virginia assembly. When the assembly very properly voted to make the separation depend on the assent of Congress and the admission of Kentucky into the Union, he vehemently urged an immediate assumption of independence, contrary to law and dignity, and openly expressed his contempt for the assembly and Congress.

He engaged in a traitorous negotiation with the British, contemplating an attack on Louisiana ; then he went to the Spanish Governor of that province and used his communication with the British as an aid in inducing the Governor to join him in a conspiracy for a dismemberment of the Union. He accepted a commission and high promotion in the army of his country while receiving pay from a foreign power for plotting to disrupt the Union. He

most betrayed the men who most befriended him. Nor was he true even to his Spanish partners in infamy. While drawing a pension from the Spanish King he entered into the conspiracy with Burr to seize his Majesty's American provinces. Not only that, but while the expedition was organizing he despatched a special agent, and an officer in the American army at that, Captain Burling, to Mexico to solicit of the viceroy "reimbursement" of the "great pecuniary" losses he had incurred in preventing an invasion of that country "by the Vice-President of the United States" (Burr). He wrote the viceroy a bombastic description of the desolating legions that menaced his land, and would have conquered it, but for his own saving valor. "I, like Leonidas, boldly threw myself in the pass," he declared.

Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, the celebrated American explorer, was in Mexico at the time Burling made his journey, and noted that he was on a strange mission, which he declined to explain to Pike. But the Mexican viceroy refused to pay tribute at that time, and Burling was ordered out of the country. That trip could not be kept a secret, and therefore it required an explanation. The explanation Wilkinson gives in his memoirs, is that he sent the officer "on grounds of public duty and professional enterprise to attempt to penetrate the veil which concealed the topographical route to the City of Mexico, and the military defences which intervened,

feeling that the equivocal relations of the two countries justified the ruse."

It should be noted that the two countries were entirely at peace, and Wilkinson had no orders that warranted him in attempting to "penetrate the veil which concealed the topographical route" to Mexico. Yet there is reason to believe that subsequently he did succeed in obtaining money from the Spanish government on some such representation as that he made to the Mexican viceroy; for he ended his days in Mexico on an estate which it is historically alleged he bought with the profits of his treason.

And so, for twenty years he wallowed in corruption. John Randolph said after the Burr trial, — "Wilkinson was the only man I ever saw who was from the back to the very core a villain. Perhaps you never saw human nature in so degraded a situation as in the presence of Wilkinson before the grand jury."

But at last his offences became so rank that he was ordered to trial. The principal charges in the indictment were, receiving bribes from Spain, and complicity in Spanish plottings against the Union.

The most effective witnesses against him were Daniel Clark, his former correspondent, now one of the leading men of New Orleans; and Thomas Power, who had been sent on special missions to him by Governor Carondelet. The trial was by court-martial, and it is declared that

the court was organized to acquit him. That is not probable. Yet it appeared on the face of the evidence that conviction must follow. Clark had previously made a sworn statement to Congress that the privileges and emoluments granted to Wilkinson by the former Spanish Governors were in consideration of his undertaking to separate Kentucky from the Union and bring her under the sovereignty and protection of Spain. That Wilkinson became a pensioner of Spain, and continued to receive a pension from her long after he had reëntered the United States army, specifying as to times and places he had received various sums, and giving amounts. He listed sums paid Wilkinson of which he (Clark) had personal knowledge, aggregating about \$30,000.

Clark gave this testimony before the court, and Power swore to payments made to Wilkinson. But this was in 1808, years after the transactions, and neither witness could substantiate his assertions by documentary proofs. It will be remembered that Clark had written a memorial to the Secretary of State back in 1787, at Wilkinson's request, but not ostensibly so. The defence—and Wilkinson conducted his own defence—now produced that paper, and impeached Clark's testimony by showing that either he must have falsified in that statement or else he was not telling the truth now. And it is seldom men are hanged by such witnesses.

Wilkinson impeached Power's testimony in a similar

way — by showing a discrepancy between his present and a previous statement he had cajoled from the man, in anticipation of just this emergency. He claimed in his own defence that he quit trading to New Orleans before he reëntered the army, and that the sums he received were due him on old accounts. This was a bold but flimsy assertion, and might have been disproved by Wilkinson's former partners, and his last book-keeper, Philip Nolan ; but it was not done. It must be remembered that the incriminating documentary evidence, the letters Miro sent to Spain, and the copy of the agreement between them, were not then available — their existence was not known. They were discovered years later.

Yet Wilkinson was acquitted, as Burr was acquitted, mainly because there had been treason among *the people*, and because it is difficult to convict an individual of a crime that has had a popular sympathy and support. After his acquittal he was given a command, in 1813, of the army operating against Canada, away from the scenes of his disgraceful traffic. He blundered badly, and was court-martialed again, this time for cowardice ; but again he was acquitted, although stigmatized by General Scott as "that unprincipled imbecile."

For resourceful intrigue, cunning in forestalling detection, and villainy of scope and imagination, he was a character to whom his Moorship's ancient, Iago, would hardly have been a capable understudy. He played fast

and loose with friend and foe alike, false to every interest but his own selfish purposes.

There was a romance growing out of Burr's disastrous exploit which does not appear to have been repeated as often as most others of his life. Wherever Aaron Burr tarried long there always was a romance. Some writers who have inclined to view his career with the eye of extenuation, if not of apology, have treated "the Madeline story" as that of at least one event in which the arch-adventurer's heart was touched to sincerity. How much of tradition there is in it, and how much of the other kind of history, may be left as uncertain — it merely adds interest to the tale.

The story is given in a serious history of Mississippi, and the authority for it credited to Governor Claiborne; and the Governor is not reputed to have been given to fiction-weaving, at least, in a professional sense.

If Claiborne may be trusted, Madeline was one of the most beautiful beings that ever entranced the visions of men. What her other name was the Governor seemingly did not think it necessary to state. In this omission may be discerned a sly intention on his part to tease our curiosity; or the good man may have assumed that it would live in romance, and everybody be familiar with it.

But, that aside, Madeline was bewitchingly beautiful, and, alas! poor. In this we have a love-tale as a statesman recites it, and without technical attention to personal

descriptions. Madeline was distractingly beautiful. She lived with her mother in a vine-decked cottage situated midway between the mansions of Colonel Osman and Major Isaac Guion. It might have been looked for, considering the Governor's training in the employment of legal terms, that he would have described the location as lying and being situate, but he did not. It no doubt ran that way in the mortgage on Madeline's mother's little plantation — but let that be forgotten.

Between the mansions, and leading by the cottage for much of the way, was a trellised walk shaded from the fierce sunheat by fragrant evergreens. Now Aaron Burr was a guest at Colonel Osman's. After he had been placed under arrest for frightening the souls of General Wilkinson and Acting Governor Mead into a quiver, and incidentally plotting to break up the Union, the colonel, with a chivalrous feeling toward a gentleman in trouble, signed Burr's bond for his appearance, and then made him comfortable in his house to await the outcome. Many people of quality thereabouts did not believe the accused guilty, and if he was, it was a sort of offence they felt a good deal of sympathy with, anyhow.

In this quiet retreat, as beautiful as it was peaceful, the spirit of Aaron Burr communed with nature as he paced the trellised walk, or meditated upon the vicissitudes of politics and conspiracies — which were all the same to him. Dapper and elegant beyond the men he had landed

among, handsome and winning, with something of the ideal prince about him, his was a personality almost irresistible both to men and women.

Within a very short time this restless spirit yearned, and as he yearned he passed the little cottage and beheld Madeline, a perfect woodland nymph, too shy to be caught casting a look toward him. She was conning her lonely lesson amid the roses that grew beside the cottage door. Her mother was visiting the narrow field which was tilled by her two or three faithful slaves who had come with them from Virginia, who had cleared the land, and protected the widow and her daughter from the dangers of the wild.

And now here was Madeline dangerously alone, for the tempter whose sparkling eyes gazed upon her was known of all persons as the one most to be dreaded among a nation. Yet so strong was the power of innocence and purity that they were Madeline's shield — and Aaron Burr walked on.

So favorite now had become the walk between the two mansions that the interesting visitor was noted as giving more time to strolling it than to communion with his friends at either house. And what should happen? Could a sweet maiden of sixteen keep always among the roses at her door? Perhaps the day she ventured along the trellised ramble she supposed the handsome stranger would not appear again, he

having gone by some time before. Be that as it may, none could blame her that he returned and met her with the courtliest of bows. She could not run away like a frightened hare. Being well-bred she was not frightened. And if she felt the trepidation natural to girlhood, his agreeable manner soon reassured her.

Would she do him the great kindness to tell him who lived in the lovely cottage to the right?—the sight of it had been a source of such exquisite pleasure to him in his lonely walks. Ah, to be sure, a delightful confirmation—he was quite certain that he had caught glimpses of her as he passed—stolen glimpses, the boldness of which she surely would forgive when she understood what a solace it had been to him in his enforced seclusion.

As he spoke he did not seem impertinent. She forgot that he was notorious, if indeed she had previously realized it. She did not remember that he was old, as compared with her own tender years. He was affable, simple, sympathetic. He hoped it would be his privilege before he departed to make the acquaintance of the fortunate father of—

No father? It was a sad misfortune!

“My father,” said Madeline, “was so strong and loving that I love to talk of him; but his death was such a dreadful tragedy that I’m afraid when I remember it. He was killed by the savage Indians who

attacked our camp one night when we were moving out here from Virginia. He was the first to defend us. I was only ten, and was so frightened I could n't even cry out. Oh, sir, that terrible night!"

It might not have been because of a tear that the listener touched his lace handkerchief to his eye, but nevertheless there was a slight tremble to his voice when he spoke. The next day he stopped at the cottage. And now it mattered not whether Madeline met him down the walk under the fir trees that whispered a monotone of sadness in the southern breeze. But she frequently did—and the days went the faster for it to both.

Then came a twilight when he spoke sorrowfully. In the clasp of his hand was the thrill of what was now to her the universe.

"Madeline, let us not part! To-morrow I must go. I am persecuted, but I shall triumph. Come with me, Madeline, my love, my soul!"

She could not answer. They walked on the knoll called the Half-way Hill. Here Madeline heard the witchery of his words as she had never heard it before. He told her that he had despaired of obtaining justice. He had great and powerful enemies who were bent on working his destruction, and he had determined to secretly leave the country. He had been famous—he would again be rich and great. She should have

wealth and high position in the social world, a position for which her grace and beauty destined her. To her he would be true as the fixed stars above them. It had been his dream to wear imperial honors. His plans were not yet dead. There were powerful aids beyond the seas that he could count on. He needed only her to spur him onward.

But Madeline, in tears and pain, would not consent. They were not married, and her faith would not permit her to think of fleeing with him without first becoming his wife. And there was her mother whom she could not leave broken-hearted and alone—no, it was impossible! Love was mighty, but she could not commit so great a sin!

Late that night Aaron Burr silently left his friend's house, took from his stable a favorite horse, and sped away. But he could not leave without once more seeing Madeline and beseeching her to accompany him. He returned at daylight to her cottage, and at her open window renewed his entreaties. All the dazzling prizes that could tempt a maiden of beauty and ambition he promised her if she would go—they would be married at the first opportunity; happiness and glory awaited!

Still the loving but sensible girl refused. She loved him; she would wait till he had conquered fortune again and came for her. Let them give each other

their promises. She would remain true to hers — forever if need be. And so they plighted their hearts, and the disappointed wooer rode rapidly away, to be taken again very soon by rough soldiery, and dragged to Richmond to stand trial for his life.

For several years Madeline waited, true to her promise, and with a firm belief that he would come again. Often was she observed resorting alone to the shaded walks where she had listened to the fascinating music of his words. But Aaron Burr came not again.

Years later, when he was a wanderer and an outcast in Europe, he wrote to her of the utter hopelessness of his circumstances, and released her from her troth. He stated that he did not intend ever to return to his native land again and, assuming with sublime egotism that she could never give her heart to another, advised her, should she survive her mother, to enter a convent. In just what spirit Madeline received this pious advice cannot be stated. But a year or two later she went with a neighboring family to Havana.

It is here that one is tempted to doubt the historical accuracy of the Governor's story, for it does not seem that any human beauty could create such a furore of enthusiasm as he says Madeline's did among the people of the Cuban capital. It had almost a maddening effect upon the cavaliers; the populace besieged the hotel where she was a guest; she was entertained by the

Governor-General, and crowds gathered about her wherever she went. At night she could hardly rest because of the continuous throngs of serenaders that sang before her windows. Many balls were given in her honor, and the offers of marriage she received — well, there was no accurate list of them preserved.

Of course, she was among a gallant and impressionable people; but one may be allowed the inference, even though Governor Claiborne failed to hint at anything of the kind, that the tales of her romantic betrothal to the most notorious adventurer of the time had much to do with the sensation she aroused.

Be it that or no, she returned to the cottage near the foot of the hill, and again was seen alone by the trellised walk. But not for long. An Englishman, a wise, calculating young man, who had looked with quiet adoration upon her at Havana while the cavaliers were losing their senses, followed her home. He won her hand, and presumably her heart. After a brief courtship she married him, and their future years were spent in peace and happiness. Both are dead, said the good Governor with a parting touch of sentiment, but the old Half-way Hill still lifts its aged brow, wrinkled with tradition, to mark the scene of Madeline's strange romance.

The reader is inclined to wonder whether this is as fanciful as Wirt's too famous description of the deluded

Blennerhasset and his beautiful wife. They never were deserving of the sympathy that was aroused for them by Wirt's maudlin declamation. But Burr seems to have conjured up a romance and mist of unreality wherever he went.

## CHAPTER V

*Philip Nolan's Expedition of Conquest — Visions of Empire — Invades Texas — Sudden Disaster — Quaint Memoir of Ellis Bean.*



ON October of 1800, Philip Nolan started on an expedition from Natchez, Miss., with a company of less than two dozen men, his design being to effect the conquest and permanent occupation of Texas.

Reckless and daring as this undertaking was, it is saved from the Quixotic category of ventures by a proper consideration of the conditions that confronted him. Aside from the savages within its undefined borders, Texas at that time had only a few hundred inhabitants, practically all of whom were Mexicans. There were two or three companies of Mexican

troops scattered throughout the province to maintain order and prevent the intrusion of foreigners. Up to this time these troops had not been overburdened with the last-mentioned part of their duties ; few civilized people had quite so abandoned themselves to dismal solitudes as to want to enter Texas.

The viceroy of Mexico was supposed by the Americans to have all he could well attend to in preventing insurrection and rebellion without sending a large force to his distant and uninhabited frontiers. Louisiana had just been retroceded to France, thus making it unnecessary to traverse a Spanish territory in order to reach the Texan border. And it was believed by Nolan that France would wink at the little discourtesy toward Spain which he was preparing to commit.

Besides all this, the venturesome Mississippian counted on picking up a good many volunteers on the march across Louisiana, while a number of his acquaintances were expected to follow and join him before he began the invasion.

As before noted, invasion of the Mexican country had been a popular theme of discussion among the South-western settlements. Almost everybody believed that sooner or later it was bound to come. And so it was not necessary in organizing this expedition, as it is natural to suppose it would be when fitting out for a hostile attack against a nation with which our government was

at peace, to conduct the business in secret. Almost every person in Natchez knew of Nolan's designs. He had been to Texas three years before, in 1797. His mission then was to procure horses for the army, and the trip was under the direction of General Wilkinson.

There was a Spanish consul resident at Natchez. Information of Nolan's enterprise reached his loyal ears. Señor Vidal entered a protest against it by a written memorial to Governor Sargent. The Governor, of course, professed that he could not see anything in the movement worth growing excited about. But he called Federal Judge Bruin for a joint consideration of the matter. Before them appeared Nolan and exhibited a passport to enter Texas issued to him by Don Pedro de Neva, commandant-general of the northeastern internal province of Mexico.

"But," insisted Consul Vidal, "may I be permitted to examine that passport? I have had advices that lead me to believe none such has been issued. Ah, to be sure! The date justifies me. You see, your Excellencies, that this passport was issued to Mr. Nolan back in 1797. His trip to the province three years ago was understood to be for a legitimate purpose. There was no military preparation. The commandant-general was pleased to grant the passport as a courtesy to General Wilkinson. It was intended to be for that particular expedition only. I maintain, your Excellencies, that it grants no privilege now."

But neither the Governor nor the judge, both appointed by the President of the United States, and sworn to maintain the dignity and the laws of the nation in the Territory, could see it in that peculiar light, — that a passport issued for a certain visit was not a passport for a lifetime; or that one issued to a horse-buyer was not good to a man intending to subvert the government. So they pronounced in Nolan's favor.

There were other Spaniards at Natchez besides the consul. Some half-dozen of them enlisted with Nolan. They were former residents of Mexico, and were sojourning abroad because of having been implicated in some of the political troubles at home, and were glad of an opportunity to strike at the vice-regal power. They knew perfectly well what the scheme was, and were only astounded that the American authorities, knowing also, should have, in a manner, set their approval on it. On his first trip Nolan had drawn a map of the country, and there can be little doubt, judging from various evidences, that he had contemplated this project since that time.

Philip Nolan was a *protégé* of Wilkinson, and for many years prior to this date had been in his employ. He was the book-keeper and shipping clerk for the general in the years of the latter's privileged trading to New Orleans. He closed up the last business of Wilkinson and Dunn when they ceased operations in 1791, at the time Wilkinson reëntered the army. If he did not know all about the

traitor's compact with Miro and Carondelet, the Spanish Governors, it is entirely safe to say that he did a lot of pretty accurate surmising.

The confidential relations subsisting between the two is attested by the letter which the general gave Nolan to Governor Gayoso de Lemos, under date of February 6, 1797, when he went on the horse-buying business. It was as follows :

This will be delivered to you by Nolan, who, you know, is a child of my own raising, true to his profession, and firm in his attachment to Spain. I consider him a powerful instrument in our hands, should occasion offer. I will answer for his conduct. I am deeply interested in whatever concerns him, and I confidently recommend him to your warmest protection. I am evidently your affectionate

WILKINSON.

This letter would indicate that the mission of the bearer was something of a more mysterious nature than the capture of wild horses on the Texas plains, and it is also one more piece of evidence that the writer was in unlawful commerce with the Spaniards. It would seem that Nolan was also "a good Spaniard" in those days — just as his chief was.

It is altogether probable that even at the date of the letter Wilkinson was acting in bad faith with his co-conspirators, the Spaniards ; that he had in contemplation a movement against Texas and Mexico, and that he was

employing Nolan to spy out the land. It is certain, at least, that Nolan imbibed his ideas of attacking the Spanish possessions from the arch-plotter, and that he was undertaking this expedition with his approbation.

Consul Vidal, having the decision against him on the question of the passport, sent a message by express to the Spanish commandant, De Neva, at Washita, informing him of the projected invasion, and declaring that Nolan was a dangerous character who had long been plotting with Wilkinson against the Spaniards. The consul acted with commendable promptness, for Nolan had proceeded only forty miles westward from the Mississippi when he was met by a Spanish patrol of fifty men. Then followed a parley. The captain of the patrol was no Cæsar. He listened to Nolan's plausible story of his desire to cultivate amicable business relations with the posts and settlements in Texas, heard how the would-be trader had been there before, and a lot of other things indicating that he had been on intimate terms with the Spaniards. In addition, there were the Spaniards themselves in Nolan's train to assure the patrol captain that it was all right; and being fairly argued out, the captain let them pass.

But Nolan knew this was not the obstacle to be feared the most. There was another company of defenders at Washita, or Ouachita, the place to which, four years later, Aaron Burr pretended to be steering his horny-handed colonizers. Not desiring to risk another arguing match, or

any other kind of engagement, Nolan left the trail and swung wide around Washita, across the prairie covered with high grass, and through the trackless forests.

It does not appear that the little band received any addition to its numbers on its march across Louisiana. On the contrary, three of its members, Mordecai Richards, John Adams, and John King, strayed from the main body either in quest of game or in scouting for the enemy, got completely lost, failed either to find their party again or to pick up its trail, and finally made their way back to Natchez. It is hinted in at least one of the accounts of the undertaking that there was method in their straying — that they weakened before the dangers and toil they were encountering, and deserted.

The remaining force of about twenty men passed around the head of Lake Bastineau, crossed Red River, and a few miles farther on came to an Indian village. It was of the Ceddo tribe. The savages evidently had not had much experience with civilized men, for they treated Nolan and his followers in a very friendly manner, supplied them with fresh horses and provisions, and sent them on their way much recuperated.

This puny band now entered the country they expected to subjugate. There was nothing to hinder them, nobody to dispute their passage of the Sabine or the Neches. There was nothing to worry them but insects and distance — seemingly interminable distance. After many tiresome

days they arrived at the Brazos. They were now well into the coveted land. It was not so bad, either. Here was a river not so muddy as some they had struggled across, woods at least partly without swamps, and a variety of game all around.

Nolan considered it a good place at which to halt, especially as they were approaching the Comanche country, and the Comanches were reputed to have a peculiar liking for the white man's scalp. So he and his men made camp, felled trees, and built a large corral of logs. This was intended for the wild horses they would capture, for they were aware that nothing so aids man in his enterprises of exploration and conquest as the horse. Tens of thousands of mustangs roamed the plains as wild as the deer. Soon the invaders had some three hundred of them captive in the corral. What with lassoing and breaking these animals, hunting the deer and jerking meat, shooting wild-fowl, and supplying their mess with fresh fish from the river, there was nothing for anyone to complain of, unless it was the incessant labors of the two negro cooks.

By and by, and not so long either, came along a visiting party of two hundred Comanche warriors. Not a very cheerful thing, to have such a lot of visitors come into the camp of twenty white men hundreds of miles from any possibility of help. But these Comanches were good fellows. They partook of the white men's cheer, stayed with

them a few days, and then invited the whole outfit to visit their chief, Necoroco, whose royal headquarters were upon the south fork of Red River.

To accept seemed like going into voluntary captivity, perhaps to slaughter. To refuse would doubtless offend the warriors, which would mean a hostile attack very soon, and annihilation. Nolan grasped the former horn of the seemingly ugly alternative, and it proved a wise action. Leaving only a few of their number to guard the corral and care for the horses, the party packed up and took to the trail with the savages, whither they could hardly surmise. But after several days' journey they arrived at Necoroco's camp, and found that they had not been deceived. The chief received them hospitably, provided them with wigwams and food, and invited them to make themselves entirely at home, — which the white men happily proceeded to do.

This incident is evidence that the Comanche has not been at all times and under all circumstances the treacherous savage which his later conduct stamped him. What palaver Nolan gave these warriors, — whether he entered into any alliance with them against other tribes, — the annals of the expedition do not make clear. It is quite likely that he entered into some compact with Necoroco which that chief considered would be to his advantage; yet it would be doing him an injustice to insist that such was the motive of his

hospitality. His guests remained with his people a month on most amicable terms, joining with them in the chase, and participating in their games and festivals. It appears that other tribes visited Necoroco during this time; that there was a general peace existing between them, and it may have been that there was a sort of congress of nations. Anyway, the white men made many friends among the savages, and returned to their camp on the Brazos well pleased with their experience.

But they were not allowed to return alone. For reasons of his own — ostensibly as a protection to his visitors — Necoroco sent an escort of able warriors with them. These redskins stayed awhile at the Brazos, exhibiting the most familiar friendship. Then they indulged a racial idiosyncrasy by departing suddenly in the night and taking with them all the tame horses, eleven in number, which the invaders had left. They also took some camp articles that were lying about handy.

Of course that was a great loss to the white men. Although they had a corralful of mustangs, it was a slow and tedious task to break them into reliable service. After a conference it was decided, therefore, to make an effort to recover their tame beasts, even if they had to go clear to Red River and make an appeal to Necoroco. Nolan decided to head the rescuing

party himself, and took with him only five others, fearing there might be an attack on his camp, which was now known as Tehuacana Hill. The party of six set out on foot, of necessity. It could not burden itself with a provision supply, and had to kill its game as it went. The rescuers were mad clear through at being so outrageously treated after such a friendly exchange of courtesies, and their confidence in their savage neighbors, which had been raised to a high register, took a sudden drop.

After a forced march of a week they came up with their cattle, which were in charge of a single Indian. It was surmised that the others, on discovering the whites after them, and not wanting to be caught red-handed, had abandoned the herd to this individual. The fellow had but one eye, but he was not blind to his situation. He professed much astonishment, and declared it was an unfortunate mistake; that being minus an eye he had been unable to distinguish, and had taken the white men's horses for their own.

Nolan considered the rascal too good a joker to kill, so he had him tied securely, and took him back to camp with the recovered steeds. They returned to Tehuacana Hill after an absence of thirteen days, and their success occasioned much rejoicing. A large log house had now been built. Good health prevailed. Privations were not rigorous, and the question of

future movements was discussed. But Philip Nolan's sands were running fast.

While the horse-thief chasers were still resting from their hard trip, there was an unlooked-for attack on their camp. This was made by a company of sixty-eight regular and thirty-two volunteer Spanish troops under command of Nimesio Salcedo, who had succeeded Pedro de Neva as commandant-general. It occurred on the night of March 22, 1801. The outpost was surprised, and the guard of seven, consisting of five of Nolan's Spanish followers and two Americans, were taken prisoners. The enemy attacked the main camp at daybreak. There were now left only twelve Americans and one negro. They fought from the square enclosure of logs, but in about ten minutes after the firing began Captain Nolan received a rifle ball in the head and was almost instantly killed.

Thus perished the first and perhaps the most audacious of the American adventurers who made hostile expeditions against Texas. His invasion was thwarted almost before it was fairly begun ; in fact, he had not been able to begin it on the scale he hoped.

Before Nolan ceased breathing the command was seized by Ellis Bean, the youngest of the company, as certainly he was the most reckless and resolute. He was only eighteen, according to his own reckoning, but he had the nerve and daring of a hardened buccaneer. The very first thing he proposed was to charge and attempt the



ELLIS BEAN  
*Of the Nolan Expedition*



capture of a small cannon which the Spaniards had brought along, and which now was belching grapeshot into the log enclosure at short range. His companions refused to accompany him. They did not long for the glory of martyrdom. But they held their fort all day, by steady firing keeping the enemy off till after dark, with only two men wounded.

They then planned a retreat, filling their powder-horns and giving the rest of their powder to the negro to carry. While crossing a creek under fire of the pursuing Spaniards, the negro and one of the wounded men stopped and surrendered. That left nine in the retreating party. Coming to a deep ravine they took refuge till morning. Then a messenger came with a white flag to tell them they must leave the country. Not a stunning demand, to be sure, and to it they readily agreed, with the stipulation that they were not to give up their arms.

So they went back and buried Nolan and started under a guard of Mexicans for Nacogdoches, the most easterly post and settlement in Texas. When they came to Trinity River they found it running over its banks. Bean and his companions made a cottonwood canoe in which they politely sent the guards across first, three or four at a time, one paddling the pirogue back. Then a bright idea occurred to Bean. He proposed to his fellows, who were all on the west bank together with the Spanish captain and most of their arms, to throw

the Spaniards' guns into the river, take the ammunition, capture the guard, and go on their way. He relates very regretfully that while one or two approved, the others thought it would be useless so long as they were being taken home anyway—a fatal error, as they soon discovered; and one which Bean bewailed as due to placing confidence in Spaniards, “a people,” he adds, “in whom you should place no trust whatever.”

When they arrived at Nacogdoches they were to await orders from Chihuahua, upon receipt of which the invaders were all placed in irons and started back toward Mexico, instead of being allowed to continue homeward. Now began a long career of misfortune and hardships which Bean was the only one to survive. Fifteen years later, after he had returned to the Mississippi country, he wrote a memoir of his wanderings, imprisonment, and sufferings which combines all the elements of romantic and fortuitous adventure — “of hairbreadth ‘scapes i’ the imminent deadly breach,” of love and torture and final triumph. The story must be mainly true, for it is altogether improbable that a man of his attainments could have composed a fiction like it.

This memoir has been referred to in some of the histories of the Southwest region as Bean's diary, but it is not likely that he kept a diary during the years it covers, or could have kept one. It is almost a certainty that he wrote from a retentive memory, and one may suspect that

where his recollection was at fault as to details he gave his imagination free exercise. The story is given as an appendix to Yoakum's history of Texas, the only time it has been printed in full, and appears to have been accepted as a veracious chronicle.

This Bean was an original package of audacity. He was reared among the hills near Knoxville, Tenn. At the age of seventeen he had a great longing to see other parts of the world. A raw but self-confident scion of backwoods hardihood, with little schooling, his desire was opposed by his father. Finally, Ellis was entrusted with a boatload of flour and whiskey which he was to take down to Natchez to market. He was accompanied by a friend of about his own age. At Muscle Shoals he broke his boat in pieces on a rock and lost all his cargo, but saved a small trunk of clothes. He had his reasons for not wanting to return home, so he kept on, any way he could, to Natchez, near which place he had an uncle living.

When he arrived there Philip Nolan was organizing his expedition for the subjugation of Texas, and young Bean enlisted with him. His uncle objected, but one day when both uncle and aunt were away from home Ellis took one of their best horses and departed. He went for three months, merely borrowing the horse. He did not get back for twelve years, and then was minus the steed. But a burning desire to see the country could not be smothered by an observance of conventionalities.

Within a few months he was in prison at San Antonio, where the nine captives of Salcedo lay several months. Then they were moved along to San Luis Potosi, where they were confined sixteen months. It was supposed they were being taken to Mexico City, but at that pace they began to doubt of ever arriving there. Bean now began to show his resourcefulness. While in this prison they grew very ragged. He told the authorities he was a shoemaker, and asked the privilege of sitting at the prison door during the daytime and making footgear. The request was granted for him and a companion. Bean was no shoemaker, but the other fellow taught him, and they made a bit of money with which they bought clothes.

After a while they were moved to Chihuahua. It was an agreeable prison custom in Mexico in those days to shift the inmates occasionally from one state prison to another, — an especially happy plan for young men in the toils yet anxious to “see the country”; even though the journeys were made on muleback in heavy irons.

The officer who conducted them this time had feeling. He took their irons off at Saltillo. Now this was grand — riding four hundred miles through interesting scenery, hand- and-foot-loose, just for all the world like travelling for one’s health. Ellis exults over it, and adds :

“Along the road and at all the towns we could look at places, and walk about and see the inhabitants. And we noticed that everywhere they were mixed with Indian,

but of a kind friendly disposed. They were exceedingly kind to us, presenting us with fruits, clothes, and money, so that, by the time we reached Chihuahua, we began to think we would soon regain our liberty."

Why, it was as fine as a triumphal procession of bull-fighters. The whole memorandum shows that Bean was a close observer, and deeply interested in new people and scenes.

After a few days in prison at Chihuahua, they were given much liberty, though required to sleep in the soldiers' barracks at night. Each man was allowed a quarter of a dollar a day for provisions — not bad, considering. And finally they were paroled, some going to other towns. Now Bean's genius begins to shine. He set up as a hatter. He had n't ever made a hat, but could turn his hand deftly to any trade, — as was the case with most frontier farmers in the dear primitive days when everyone found it necessary to practise artisanship variously. He found a merchant who trusted him for materials, then he employed two Mexican hatters. Soon he had a reputation for excellent hats, and extended the business till, as he asserts, he made as high as fifty to sixty dollars a week. He laid up money to make his escape, and prepared for it by buying four horses, three guns, and three brace of pistols. This was after he had worked four years at establishing a manufacturing business.

Such conditions for a war prisoner seem strange, but

the explanation lies in the fact that the case of these nine Americans had been submitted to the Spanish King at Madrid, for decision as to their fate, and such a long time elapsed without hearing from his Majesty that the authorities began to consider the case gone by default. In truth, Bean says his companions appeared to be contented and happy, all having taken up various occupations. As for himself, he could not bear living under a tyranny, however mild; and so he wrote to one of his old comrades whom he liked, to attempt an escape with him.

That was his undoing. The letter fell into the hands of another of his party, an unprincipled beggar, who immediately reported it to the commanding officer at Chihuahua, hoping thus to ingratiate himself with that authority. Bean seemed to take delight in publishing to an abhorring world that "this renegade was Tony Waters, of Winchester, Va." It is not known what Tony got for his treachery, but Ellis was soon in a dungeon and again in irons. They also put him in stocks for a while. The hat business went into the hands of a receiver; it is not hard to guess whom,—the commandant directing things. And the halcyon days of Bean were over.

One day one of his comrades came to Bean's cell, extremely ill. He just wanted to be with a countryman during his last days, even in a dungeon. Ellis

sent out and got wine and delicacies for him, and wanted him to go to more comfortable quarters, but the sick man refused. Sad days followed, and in the midst of their affliction a most grotesque annoyance was thrust upon them in the form of a big Indian, charged with murder, who played a jew's-harp (his sole possession) so incessantly that both Bean and his sick friend nearly went frantic. They begged him for pity of humanity to stop, but he heeded it not—went right on twanging over and over again snatches from the most distracting ragtimes of the day. They wanted him to rest awhile, but he thanked them and said he was n't tired. It was the most remarkable case of Indian torture recorded. The sick man began to rave. Bean's madness took a different form. He snatched the instrument of torture from the musical barbarian, and broke the tongue out of it. Then the Indian got mad. He came at Bean with a rush. Both were ironed, Ellis having on two pair of the impediments; but he laid the musician low. The sick friend died three days later.

After three months they let Bean out again. He met Tony Waters, and says he might have killed him, but only challenged him. Waters refused to fight. Ellis then went with a good stick and gave him such a beating that it was several days before he was able to crawl to the alcalde and lodge a complaint. But the

alcalde knew about the cause and refused to order Bean's arrest; whereupon Waters declared he was not given justice, and on that was sentenced to jail for a month for contempt.

The unfortunate adventurers had now been five years in Mexico. Their case had been laid before President Jefferson, but he said they must stand the consequences of their acts. They seemed to think it was the duty of their government to rescue them, apparently having little idea of the flagrant nature of their offence.

Bean now set out alone to escape, but was caught and again ironed. His old companions also were brought in and shackled. They blamed him for his rash attempt. But something was coming. The Spanish monarch had leisurely reached their case and passed on it. In a few days two priests — "parsons," Bean calls them — were ushered in to the convicts. "Asked what was going to be done with us, they answered that they had come for us to confess, if we wished our sins to be forgiven."

It was now understood they were to be put to death. Most of them confessed, but Bean refused, and said he must have four or five days to recollect all his sins. "The parsons advised me to begin, and God would enlighten me, and help me to remember them."

The question was, whether they were all to be hanged.

Bean thought his friend Tony Waters deserved it, anyhow, "being the greatest villain of the lot." But the next day the priests came again, and with them a colonel in full uniform, who read the King's order. It was that every fifth man was to be hanged for firing on the King's troops. But in view of there now being only nine of them, the local magistrate had decided that a faithful execution of the sentence required that only one need die.

Into the prison were brought a drum, a tumbler, and a set of dice. They were now to gamble for their lives. The question of which one was to die was to be decided by the dice. These they threw from the tumbler upon the drumhead. The oldest threw first. Bean, being the youngest, threw last. He who threw the lowest lost. "And so we went up, one by one, to cast the awful throw of life or death!" The man who threw next to Bean got four, the lowest. Bean threw five.

After the execution Bean and four others were sent to Acapulco, on the west sea-coast. They were considered a dangerous lot. Each was double-shackled, and a guard of twenty-five soldiers conducted them. Bean says the officer in command gave them easy-riding horses. They went by the City of Mexico, nine hundred miles, as he counted it, from Chihuahua. The people in the towns came as usual to see them. At Salamanca they "halted in a large square, enclosed by high walls and houses," so that the prisoners were given much liberty.

Here the doughty young Tennesseean made his first heart conquest in Mexico, at least the first he tells us about. This romance at Salamanca is related very circumstantially by the hero, and carries the heartbeat of tropical climes. A young woman, beautiful and sympathetic, fell into conversation with Bean, and, becoming much impressed with his appearance and qualities, slyly asked him if he did not wish to escape. Bean replied sadly that it was impossible, and that he was resigned to his fate.

His words and manner of speaking went far, — he could hardly have answered her more effectively to heighten her interest in him. She declared she could free him, and went away. Upon inquiry Bean learned that she was Señora Maria Baldonada, and that she had recently been married to a very rich man much older than herself. Perhaps she, too, desired to escape.

Bean was thinking hard when he lay down on his mat in a corner of the great yard, while yet, long after dark, the people kept coming and going, laughing and singing, — when would these careless and indolent people sleep? Presently the señora came again, in company with a very dark man in a long cloak. He might have been either a professional patriot or a pirate. The señora whispered to Ellis that this man had brought files to cut off his irons, and that he should follow him into a stable for the purpose. After his irons were off, she said, a man

on top of the wall would drop him a rope, pull him up to the top, and then conduct him to where she would be waiting.

The beautiful Maria had been busy. The brigandish fellow stood silently by, his arms folded, his files and deadly instruments under his long cloak. One would have supposed that so daring a scamp as Bean would have sprung to the chance, but he declined the proffered aid. He says it was because his companions would have been made to suffer extra hardships had he escaped, and so replied to Señora Maria. She suggested that he should take care of himself and let God take care of all; that she had several haciendas, at one of which he might secrete himself. But whatever his reason, he would not take the venture.

The next morning he visited the señora at her house, giving the soldiers who guarded him drink-money to solace themselves with during his call. At this interview she told him she had been married against her desires; that she did not feel really bound to a husband whom she did not love, and proposed again that he escape with her, this time suggesting bribing the soldiers and taking their horses. She was ready to open her purse in the execution of her plans—she had already done that. She would go and spend her life with him in his own country, trusting to his honor not to desert her for another.

Bean hesitated — and the guard returned. And he relates with a sigh, “the soldier helped me on my horse, and I bid adieu to the lovely Maria Baldonada.”

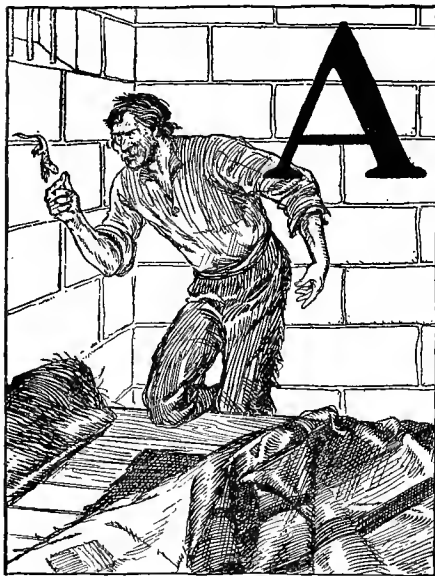
One may suspect that she was not so beautiful as the adventurer would have us believe, or that, as he told her, he expected to be set free when he reached Mexico, and did not feel like taking desperate chances. The señora showed sadness at his refusal, and said that when he was disappointed in his expectations he would remember her. Bean admits that during the next three years he often regretted he had not accepted her proposition.

Before leaving his inamorata she had given him a package and a letter, asking him to put them in his pocket and not to look at them till the end of the day's journey. They stopped that night at Arcos, and he impatiently opened them. He says that in the package he “found three joes in small gold pieces.” He gives a copy of the letter, which is really touching in its expressions, and could hardly have been written by one devoid of education or refinement. She wrote that she was not ashamed to own that the love she felt for him was more than she could bear. “Perhaps,” she continued, “you may think a woman demented who could love one in your situation, bound in irons. When I first saw you I was touched with compassion ; then I found my heart distressed ; and when I came to examine myself, I found it to be love.”

This really worked upon Ellis's feelings. He acknowledges he was unhappy, and could not pass the time as usual. But there were other things to concern him when he arrived at Mexico, and was cast into a prison yard with three hundred other convicts, mostly Indians and negroes.

## CHAPTER VI

*Continuation of Ellis Bean's Experiences in Captivity—Becomes a Mexican Insurrectionist—War and Romance.*



**A**FTER a time the prisoners were sent along to Acapulco, which seaport Bean described as having a strong fortification, the castle being of stone, the walls twelve feet thick, defended by a hundred guns of large calibre. Bean, marked as extra-dangerous, — although he modestly refrained from

telling what he had done to merit that distinction — was segregated in a cell, small and tight and dismal, between the thickest walls. Light came economically through a small window, or hole, at one end, which was cross-barred. In the door was an opening three inches square.

He would have preferred less privacy, but all his scheming to reduce it was long in vain. He became neighborly with the guard who, for a dollar, bought him a small knife; but it did him little good here. His joyous occupation of seeing the country seemed to have ended for all time in this sarcophagus three thousand miles from home. He might as hopefully have been a toad in a well.

It was here that he found his pet lizard, about which he tells a story that matches some of Baron Trenck's. It was what the Spaniards called a *quija*, so Ellis stated, some nine or ten inches long, about three inches thick, and as white as snow. It had a good singing voice and, according to the memoir, "if you hold it between you and the light, you may see the bones in its limbs and body."

Watching the little visitor, Bean saw that it was trying to catch flies. He did not know whether or not it was poisonous, but in his painful desolation he warmed toward the little reptile, and set about trying to feed it. This opened up a diversion. He caught flies, impaled them on a straw from the mat, and, slipping them toward the shy creature, he at length got it to take them. Confidence was followed by friendly intimacy, the lizard taking flies from the hand. "Every morning as he came down the wall he would sing like a frog, giving me notice of his coming. In about a week he was so gentle he did not leave me at night, but stayed with me all the time.

When the guard opened the door he would get frightened, and hide under my blanket. I found that he was sincerely my friend. In fact, he was my only companion and amusement."

After eleven months Bean found that some of his company had sickened, and were in the hospital. Feeling that any change was desirable, he complained of being ill, and asked to be sent to the cure-house, too. The prison doctor was sent for. Upon hearing him coming, Bean struck his elbows against the wall, which raised his pulse so high the medic thought he had a fever. So an order was made, and a muscular peon carried him on his back half a mile to the hospital. Evidently they suspected him, for, although he had on both manacles and shackles, they added to his security by placing his legs in stocks also. Or perhaps it was a way they had of treating fever — not much more absurd than some remedies in general use in that day.

As he was now fixed, Bean could hardly turn; and he tells that thousands of chinchies took mean advantage of it, to feed upon him day and night. They had no regular hours for meals—they just kept on biting. Now this was such unusual hospital treatment that Ellis got well the next day and begged to be taken back to his cell. But they were not so ready to attend to his wishes; and it was peculiarly fortunate, for in the evening he was taken with a violent fever, real enough. Bean's simple

explanation was that it was caused by being removed from a place where there was no air to one where there was too much. But might not there have been something in the transmission of fever germs by the chinchés ?

He was very ill twenty days before he began to recover. It was a time of great sickness in the town. The hospital was crowded. A suffering man was laid on each side of him. One died in about three hours. Next morning two more were dead close by. Yet he improved. As he recuperated he developed an appetite that was a scandal. The hospital heads were shocked, and sought to alleviate it by administering two ounces of bread and some gruel in the morning, and the head of a fowl and some soup for dinner. He still had some money, but was not permitted to buy anything. As he was half-starved he growled, and asked the priest who served him why it was he always got the head and neck of the chicken, and no other part. The priest answered him curtly, — he declares profanely, — which must have shocked Bean, who thereupon slammed the plate at the holy father. It cut his tonsured pate open, and the outraged patient followed it up with the water-pot, which fortunately missed its shining mark.

This violent action not only skinned the convalescent's ankles badly against the shackles, but entirely exhausted him. It also greatly enhanced his previous reputation of a bad man. So they locked the ravenous invalid's head in a wooden stock for fifteen days, keeping him

practically in one position all of that time. The chinchas now fairly revelled on him. What a human being may suffer under such conditions is too excruciating to dwell upon. Bean says frankly that he regretted not having killed the priest, as in that event they would have taken his life, and thus put an end to his tortures.

But when they released him from the stock they also took off his shackles and replaced them with a chain of about fifteen pounds' weight fastened to each ankle. Yet, by wrapping them around his waist, he could manage very well.

On the road back to the castle — he now being “well” — under two guards, the desire to try an escape was irresistible. He had no further longing for conquest, he was not even enthusiastic about seeing more of the country. He wanted merely to go home. So he invited his guards to enter a garden “where a woman sold a kind of small-beer.” Bean politely ordered some for his keepers. Then he set the mugs flowing again. After which he conceived an intense admiration for the fragrant pinks growing in the garden, as large as roses. Long quaffing of the small-beer made the soldiers admire the pinks, also. Ellis offered to buy one of them a bunch if he would come out in the garden. The soldier complied. But just as the fellow was about to accept the posy, Bean caught him by the neck with one hand and with the other placed a knife at his throat — the knife he had induced

the guard at the castle to buy for him for domestic purposes.

“Give up your sword or I’ll kill you!”

The order was so stern the soldier winced. Feeling that he was in desperate hands he meekly inquired what was the meaning.

“I’m going on a journey,” said Ellis, “and need a sabre like that. I need a man, too. Come with me and save your neck. Otherwise they’ll hang you for losing me.”

This was logical. Seeing that he had sadly erred, and fearing the consequences, the guard consented. Still, Bean hardly dared trust him. He sent him with a dollar to buy bread at a near-by shop, and he not returning as quickly as he might, Ellis struck off alone. In a few minutes he was in the woods. He managed to cut off his chains with a steel he had picked up, one used to strike fire. And now he was free to drink in the delights of liberty amid sweet-smelling blossoms and beautiful foliage musical with the songs of brilliant-plumaged birds. He says he was not weak, though he had been so long ill and starved, but felt strong and happy in the ineffable sense of liberty.

At night he ventured to a small shop and bought bread, bacon, and cheese, and a gourd of native brandy. Passing another shop he heard two men talking. They were speaking English—with a brogue. Bean looked

cautiously in, then entered. The men he had heard proved to be two Irish sailors from a privateer in port that day from Lima. He briefly told them his situation, and they took him to the captain on the brig. Rigged in sailor's clothes he went on board like a jolly tar, thinking he was safe. In truth, he ought to have been, for they took the precaution to thwart the search for him which they suspected would be made. The head of a great water-pipe was broken in, and Bean took up his abode in it against the hour of sailing.

Sure enough, a patrol came to search, but not finding him returned to shore. Now all was well, with the vessel to sail in two hours, — but what then? Why, a grumpy Portuguese cook aboard, a greasy old tar-stew, having a grudge against the sailors who befriended the stowaway, quietly went ashore and reported the man in the water-pipe.

Down came the patrol again stronger than before. They rolled out the pipe, dragged Bean out, tied him like a package for a long shipment, and he might as well have been a sack of beans, considering the way they threw him down into the lighter. He was badly bruised, and heartsick beyond thinking. In an hour they had him back in his narrow cell in the grim castle, and in double irons. It was like waking up in his stone coffin after a delectable dream of freedom, and green woods, and merry friends! Like a true

philosopher, however, he consoled himself with the thought that he had enjoyed a few hours of life and happiness, rather than allow his spirits to darken over a renewal of his misery.

When he again became accustomed to the quarter-light he found there to greet him, his little friend, the lizard, with which he divided his boiled beef once a day. Ellis Bean was not all bad, by a good deal. His appreciation of nature and friendship with dumb things answer for that. He named his white, translucent lizard "Bill," took it into his pallet, and played with it. One day a good old priest came to see the lizard, saying he had heard about it from the watch; and when he observed the intimacy existing between the prisoner and the reptile, remarked that it was in the power of man to do anything if he would but turn his attention to it. And he gave Bean some small silver.

One day Bean heard a woman singing. He squeezed up to the grated hole in the wall, so as to see her. For some time before he had employed his time at twisting a cord out of the palmetto of his mat, making one several yards long. On seeing the woman, he called softly. She could see no one. He called again, and told her where he was. She was very, very sorry for him, *probracito!* Would she buy him some brandy, if he would throw her the money? That she would, in pity. He flung out both silver and string, and then

sat like a fisherman waiting for a bite — or rather, for a drink.

Presently the kind woman called to him to pull, which he did with care, and hauled in a bladder of pulque. It not being full, he could just manage to work it through the grating. He drank and lay down. Soon his sorrows floated out at the grimy, grated window. Then he drank the rest of it. And this is the way the candid rascal puts himself on record about it to the rude scandalization of all total abstainers: "I can truly say that, during the year and five months I stayed in this cell the last time, the hour I was drunk and unconscious of everything was the only happy time I saw."

But the light of day was about to break on him again. One morning when the inspectors came he heard them talking about blasting rocks, and saying no one understood placing the charges. Bean began to explain the method to them. Was he familiar with the work? It was his original occupation. It was exactly in his line. Next day, under direction of the Governor, he was taken out and set at the work. His shackles were removed and a ten-foot chain fastened to each foot. At the place of work there were about forty prisoners employed, with about twenty soldiers to guard them.

Bean made his matches in a house near by, where, of

course, there was a woman. And some way the women were always good to him. He bribed this one to buy him twelve knives and keep them in her house till he needed them. She might have thought he would require them at fuse-making, but when he got her to lay in a little arsenal of pistols and cartridges, she must have suspected other objects. But she said nothing; and now Ellis began stirring his fellow-prisoners to mutiny. They heeded, and thought it would be well, and he distributed his knives and pistols among the trustiest of them.

At a signal he struck down his guard with a stone on the temple. The others attacked the soldiers each in his way. A panic ensued. The guards fled, those who had not been disabled, and the mutineers went in the opposite direction. But they separated badly, Bean making a running fight in company with an old Spaniard, who was shot down, and then he found himself alone on a mountain-side. By hacking the blades of his knife and razor together he improvised a saw, with which he cut off his chains. Then he encountered a former acquaintance, and after buying some food at a hut they pushed on together toward the coast with the hope of finding a ship.

Ill-fortune was their shadow. Finding themselves surrounded they struck into a marsh of vines and tanglewood. For several days they beat about in this dense undergrowth like foxes before the hounds. Having been so long unaccustomed to walking, Bean's feet soon were

blistered and swollen so that he could not run. Even then he fought till he was knocked senseless. The thorns had made rags of his clothing, and had lacerated his flesh. Faint with hunger, he was carried first to Cajucan and placed in stocks. From there he was soon taken back to the castle at Acapulco, but instead of being thrown into his old cell, he was now chained to a powerful mulatto and turned into the court.

The mulatto was told to take care of the dangerous white man, and to whip him if necessary. If he had killed him the officials no doubt would have felt relieved, and urged no heavy penalty; for that Bean was giving them great trouble is obvious. Well, the yoked pair in the yard of course pulled unevenly. The mulatto, who Bean says was sullen and ugly-tempered, jerked his yoke-mate around rudely. Bean says nothing about his own temper, but we may imagine what it was, for he picked up part of a bull's skull which had one horn on it and knocked the dark one down. Then he continued to beat him till he cried for mercy. When he was rescued by the guards the mulatto begged to be let loose from such a devil; which request seemed reasonable and was granted.

Now they took Bean and fastened one of their great solid convict-wheels around his neck, so immense that he could not reach the rim of it. Of all the various modes of punishment with which Bean grew familiar he says this was the queerest, and not the least disagreeable.

The reputation he had established may be judged by the fact that the Governor of the castle wrote to the viceroy asking that this troublesome prisoner be sent to some other fort, as he was weary of him. In response the viceroy ordered him transferred to Manila; but at this juncture affairs took an entirely new turn.

Another insurrection broke out. Another revolutionist had started in to become the Washington of Mexico. This time it was Morelos, the ex-priest, who started out with five negroes to free some millions from tyranny! He expected to throw off the Spanish power and establish a republic. His first point of attack was Acapulco, and before reaching there it was reported he had been joined by several hundred men. This force becoming a menace, the Governor of the fort armed all the prisoners who would promise loyalty, — Bean with the others. But no sooner did this human explosive get into the ranks than he began to preach revolution himself. His fellow-soldiers were mostly Indians or half-breeds. They asked him what the republican movement meant. He told them — such of them as he dared trust — that it was a very great thing; that the natives all should join it; that it was the design to drive the Spaniards out, and then the natives would be generals and colonels and judges, and all the riches would fall into their hands. They all agreed that it was good, — a proper thing; and promised to watch for an opportunity to join the insurrectionists.

Bean and six others were picked to reconnoitre the rebels. He fell in with them, betrayed his companions, who were captured, and the whole squad was taken before Morelos. Bean found that the chief really had about one hundred and fifty men, twenty old guns in bad repair, a swivel, and six pounds of powder;—but that was much more than he started with.

Ellis joined the insurrectionists and at once began making powder, about which he had taken pains to learn something. He had women crush the saltpetre and sulphur on their *metates*—grooved stones for grinding corn. After arranging with Morelos, he returned to the Governor's command with an exciting story about how he had escaped after being captured by the rebels. He also entertained the Governor by telling him that Morelos had over one thousand fierce adherents well armed; and also related some diverting tales concerning their prowess.

By this time Bean had made about seventy-five "patriots" among the King's men. He sent word to Morelos of the true situation of the royal army, where its artillery of four pieces was stationed, and advised him to attack that night with his whole force. Morelos followed the advice, the attack proving very successful for him. The traitors under the Governor turned against their comrades, and most of the latter were captured. Morelos took five hundred and twenty-six prisoners. He now had



JOSÉ MARIA MORELOS

*Mexican revolutionist*



arms and ammunition. Bean was promoted colonel, and at once proposed to storm and plunder Acapulco.

The guns of the strong fort at Acapulco covered the bay, having been placed as a defence against hostile attack from that quarter. Apparently the engineers who built the works never contemplated an insurrectionary attack by land; so now there was little to protect the town from assault by the rebels. Morelos acceded to Bean's proposition, and the American held such a keen grudge against the place that he made a pretty thorough raid of it. He came out with a lot of booty — some \$30,000 in goods and \$8000 in money.

Bean was now a factor in the Morelos uprising. From the time that he and his seven surviving comrades arrived at Acapulco for incarceration, the chronicle of the Nolan expedition narrows to the recital of his individual exploits. The other members are hardly again mentioned in his memoir, although he asserts that he was the only one of the prisoner band who lived to return to the United States. The expedition perished to a man save only its Xenophon, who in the end had little to write besides the story of his own wanderings. And now he was aiding an attempt at revolution in the country against which he had set out with his puny designs of conquest.

Bean followed up his auspicious beginning as a patriot warrior by fighting and winning two or three more engagements, in one of which he was painfully but not

dangerously wounded. In another he ambushed a company of several hundred royalists which the Governor of Acapulco in person was leading against the republicans. Nearly the whole command was captured, including the Governor who had kept the now victorious leader in prison so long at the fort. But his Excellency was too badly wounded for the American to gloat over his captivity, and was sent back to the castle, where he soon died.

After several months more of campaigning with varying success, but steady accession to the insurgent force as there was also steady strengthening of the royal army, the rebels besieged the fort at Acapulco. A demand of surrender, signed by Bean, was answered by a letter from the commandant offering him a colonel's commission and \$10,000 reward if he would desert Morelos and join the King's army. But Bean was not to be caught by any such chaff; he knew what the consequences were likely to be should the insurgents fail, and besides he hated the tyrant cause. So he returned a haughty refusal, answering that the King had not money enough to buy him or make him a tyrant's friend.

About everything possible on land having happened to the adventurer, he now prepared to take to the water. Out in the bay was a small island with stores of provisions from which the fort was replenished. To take or destroy these supplies Bean constructed some twenty rude boats, and in them landed five hundred of his men on the island

one calm night. At daylight he charged the defences and took everything. That day he fought and defeated (mainly through strategy) two schooners sent to resist him, one of which he disabled and captured. Now, having the source of supply cut off, the fort surrendered within a few days. Bean had lived to humble the royalists and capture the stronghold where, an alien and a life convict, he had suffered so long. The whimsical wheel of fortune does not match this every day. This was Bean's high-water mark of glory in his career as a Mexican patriot.

In the memoir we are following several leaves are missing from the manuscript just after the events last noted; and when we catch the thread again we find our subject at the house of a Mexican planter, whose wife is offering him her daughter in marriage, — something which the young lady herself very much encourages. It was at the house of a royalist, too, and they must all have taken a fancy to him, as they had procured him a King's pardon. Just what he had been doing through the missing leaves, and how he came to be in this household feasting on the fattened calves, with the daughter of the hacienda yearning over him, must be imagined. Being so sure of him, the family had prepared for the wedding, with priests, visitors, and the other accessories; but the enforced candidate for nuptial honors ran away. He begged his excuses, and left the girl with a fond kiss (he boldly acknowledges it) and a promise to come back when the war was over.

It is things like these in the rascal's account that incline one to doubt the universal loveliness of Mexican femininity in those days.

Reverses came to Morelos, and the hard-pressed leader suggested that Bean make his way to the United States and instigate another campaign for conquest against Texas, so as to divide the attention of the royalists. The citizens of Tehuacan showed their confidence in the American by raising a fund of \$10,000 for him to use in the proposed enterprise. On the East coast he fitted out a small schooner, manned her with a crew from one of Lafitte's privateers, — which means with a lot of pirates, — and sailed for Louisiana.

During his relations with Morelos, Bean had become acquainted with a young woman of good family, related to the leader. Her people had lost their fortunes in the insurrection. This time the adventurer was not proof against Cupid's wiles. On his way to the coast to prepare for a return to his own country, he visited the young lady's family at their hacienda of Branderrillas, and before he departed he was married to Señorita Anna Gorthas, whose loveliness and whose virtues he speaks of with manifest emotion. And well he might, for her loyalty to him is a tribute to her noble qualities, while it is difficult to comprehend his conduct with regard to her.

While preparing to leave the hacienda some days after his marriage, he was surprised by a troop of the enemy

and had to take sudden flight. He relates that he barely escaped, without coat or money. They secured all his effects except two hundred doubloons, which his young wife buried in the sand. It was many years before he returned to her, and in the meanwhile a turn in political events made her rich. The republican insurgents were suppressed, Morelos was taken and shot. The sequestered estates of the Gorthas family were in time (after Mexican independence was achieved) restored, and so finally was Anna's inheritance. Quiet did not come to Mexico, but she lived in peace and hope on her great hacienda, surrounded by her servants and peon tenants, true to her soldier husband.

It would be pleasanter if something as creditable could be said for him. His actions the next few years can be accounted for only on the supposition that he took it for granted he would never dare to return to Mexico.

When he reached New Orleans with his schooner and pirate sailors he found that war was on again between Great Britain and the United States. Also he found that an old acquaintance, W. C. C. Claiborne, was Governor of Louisiana; further, he found another old Tennessee acquaintance in command of an army and grimly threatening the Louisiana legislature for disloyal sentiments. Bean could no more have refrained from following General Jackson against the English than he could have loved Tony Waters. The English squadron was approaching,

and he enlisted. However, he had previously become convinced that such an expedition as he had come to encourage was out of the question ; so now he was assigned to the artillery, and served a twenty-four pounder at the battle of New Orleans. After the victory he got leave from Jackson to return to Mexico. Arriving at Vera Cruz, he gathered about him a small company, set out on a journey of six hundred miles to join Morelos, and got to him with only six men. On learning of the non-success of Bean's journey, Morelos determined to send an ambassador to the United States to solicit aid ; and with him Bean returned to this country. Soon after their arrival here Morelos was taken, and his insurrection was at an end.

Feeling himself an outlaw in Mexico, the adventurer went to Natchez. It is presumed the rod which his irate uncle had laid up on the gun-rack for him more than a dozen years before was now obsolete. There, in a year or two, he married a Miss Midkiff, with whom and her father he removed to Arkansas. After the death of this father-in-law he went to Texas, where he lived till 1825. Whether his American wife died or not does not appear from the annals ; but in the year mentioned he went once more to Mexico, a republic having at last been established there, rejoined his faithful Anna, and died on her estate in 1846.

## CHAPTER VII

*Reuben Kemper, Buccaneer — Unlawful Seizure of Baton Rouge District — Early-Day Terrorism — Characters that have been Whitewashed — Grotesque Campaign against Mobile District.*



AFTER the survey of the boundary line between the United States and the Floridas in 1797, it was hoped the prejudice and ill feeling that had been engendered by one reason or another between the Americans and the residents of the Spanish possessions would be allayed. But such happy results were not realized. The irritation in the Mississippi region was not soothed away even by the passing of Louisiana to the Americans, early in 1804.

A bitter controversy now arose concerning the Louisiana boundary. The purchase of that great Territory from

France, or rather, from her First Consul, had not been consummated in a manner to forestall such disputes. In all that has been written in the multitude of memoirs of those who happened for a period to be near Napoleon, from Bourrienne to his last gossipy physician, nothing gives a more intimate glimpse into that unknowable man's character than two simple incidents of this transaction.

Mr. Livingston, one of the American negotiators, grew restive under the slow progress of the business, and one day hinted to Joseph Bonaparte, with whom he was on a friendly footing, that if he would make a brotherly suggestion to the First Consul as to certain matters pending, it would hasten a conclusion.

"I will gladly do so," Joseph replied in substance. "We are good brothers, and I may always talk with him. But I promise no more. My brother has no counsellors — he is his own adviser."

And finally, when the deal was closed and the treaty drawn up, Marbois, who had really conducted the negotiation for France, or her ruler, asked the latter if he had observed in the document a lack of definite boundary descriptions of the territory conveyed to the United States.

"No," replied Napoleon, "but if there is no obscurity about them already there, you had better put one in."

It flashed on his mind that boundary complications might involve his friendly purchaser in trouble with Spain and England, who had provinces adjoining Louisiana;

and, of course, a row between those powers would most likely prove to his own advantage.

In regard to Louisiana and Napoleon, it was not a few pigmies alone who in America dreamed of establishing a great empire over the Southwestern part of this continent. With the retrocession of the province by Spain to France it was expected by many that there was the beginning of great things. That Napoleon pondered deeply over the possibilities of empire in the new world, there is much good reason for believing. It is asserted that he had chosen Bernadotte as the instrument well adapted to working out his lofty designs. He was aware of Bernadotte's great abilities, and correspondingly jealous of his exercise of them in France. If they could be directed to creating a nation in America that would at once be dependent on and a support to France, a triple purpose would be subserved.

Pickett says in his history that Napoleon probably had in view the ultimate conquest of a portion of the United States, to be added to Louisiana, and that he was considering plans of sending a large army across the ocean for that service. Of course, Napoleon saw visions; he may have seen this kind, and he may not. But it is an exceedingly interesting problem to consider what might have transpired on this continent, in that marvellous era between 1800 and 1814, with Bernadotte's military and administrative genius at work moulding an empire out of the great

Southwest under the guardianship of Napoleon, and neither of them being at all reverential toward the territorial rights of the young American republic. Whether or not Napoleon had any such dreams, it can unhesitatingly be said that he had far more foolish ones.

The territory under hot dispute immediately after the Louisiana Purchase was that lying between the thirty-first degree of latitude on the North, Bayou Iberville on the South, the Mississippi River on the West, and Pearl River on the East. This had been organized by Spain into a District, called the Government of Baton Rouge, and placed under command of Don Carlos de Grandpré. It comprised parts of Baton Rouge, Mancha, Thompson's Creek, and Bayou Sara.

A controversy also arose about "Mobile District," between Pearl and Perdido Rivers and the Gulf. The United States claimed these two districts with her deed of Louisiana, arguing that Napoleon transferred everything he got from Spain; and surely he got those from Spain. But Spain would not admit it. She countered with the assertion that just before the close of the American Revolution she herself became engaged in war with England; that she took by conquest the "Mobile District," then part of West Florida; that in 1783 Great Britain confirmed this by treaty, and that the territory had always been considered a part of West Florida, thus denying that Napoleon could make any cession of it.

Now it all depended upon whether the districts had been parts of Louisiana or West Florida; and it looked as though one nation's claim on this point was as good as another's. The people of Mississippi, bordering on the disputed parcels, stoutly maintained that the contention of their country was valid; the lands were rich, and they wanted them for themselves. As a fact, that had more to do with convincing them of the justice of the American claim than any analysis of the conditions.

These disputed tracts are thus referred to here because connected with them is one of the most remarkable episodes, as it is distinctly one of the most discreditable, in the early history of our country; an episode too often condoned by writers and politicians, and too readily forgotten by the people. And further, because it is necessary in giving a sketch of the buccaneer Reuben Kemper, whose chief exploits are noted in their annals.

Many residents of Mississippi settled "over the line" in Baton Rouge, while the boundary line dispute was under negotiation for settlement by the two governments. Others moved near the line ready to cross. Among the latter were Reuben, Nathan, and Samuel Kemper. They were sons of a Baptist preacher, natives of Virginia, and for a while had lived with their father in Ohio. The family came to Mississippi in 1803, and established itself near Pinckneyville.

The brothers were boisterous frontiersmen, Reuben

being of huge frame, loud voice, and an address that passed for affability. Among his accomplishments, besides those of knife and gun, was his profanity, which the men of his school pronounced unusually "eloquent." He and his brothers are reported in some accounts to have acquired land grants from Spain in the Baton Rouge District, which they knew would be very valuable if the country were opened to Americans. It was a desire to speculate on the grants of land given them for their own occupancy under Spanish laws and restrictions, that they began scheming to dispossess the Spaniards.

However, there is doubt if they had even so much of an excuse for their threatened raid. Governor Grandpré heard so much about their boasts and menaces that he foolishly determined to arrest and lock them up. He sent eight hired kidnappers to the house of Nathan Kemper at twelve o'clock on the night of September 3, 1805. Nathan's residence was on the American side of the line. The kidnappers employed were citizens of Mississippi Territory. Their names were Ritchie, Kneeland, Butler, Bomer, McDermott, and Flowers, with two Hortons. These men took along seven negroes, and the party was armed with guns, clubs, and ropes.

Reuben was sleeping at his brother's house, when the door was quietly forced. The posse entered the room in which he lay, dragged him from his bed, beat him with clubs, and then bound him. They went through the

... same ceremony with Nathan. His wife ventured to interfere, and was threatened with death. She was struck in the scuffle. The brothers were severely used. They begged to know what they had done to merit such harsh treatment.

“You have ruined the Spanish country!” was the only answer returned by the captors.

Reuben and his brother were gagged, lines were tied around their necks, and they were then made to run before the horses which the kidnappers rode, to within the Spanish lines. At the same hour another party had visited the tavern kept by Samuel Kemper at Pinckneyville; they beat, gagged, and pinioned him, and carried him off in the same way. Running by the side of the horses, Sam fell, having been unable to keep up, and was dragged about a hundred yards by the rope around his neck. All three were delivered to Captain Solomon Alston, in the service of the Spanish governor, who took them to Tunica Landing, and placed them in a boat under guard for Baton Rouge.

This was a barbarous proceeding, to be sure — similar to what the victims had been threatening against the Spaniards. But the cruel game had only begun.

A Doctor Towles, visiting a patient early on the morning of the raid, heard of it. He galloped his horse to Point Coupee and informed Lieutenant Wilson, the American commandant there, of the outrage. Wilson got

under motion at once with a squad of soldiers and rescued the Kempers, also capturing their Spanish guard. The latter had not been active in the raid. They were sent to the town of Washington together with the Kempers. The case was heard by a Judge Rodney, and all parties were discharged.

The Kempers now were furious and vengeful. They set to work among their kindred spirits and got together a company, pledged to the enterprise of expelling the Spanish inhabitants from the District and subverting the Government of Baton Rouge. Such a movement had been contemplated. Revenge now forced it. They sent no memorial to the United States government, not even to the Governor of Mississippi. They were "the people," and backed by the people; styled themselves "patriots," apparently for the reason that they were bent on deserting the country of which they were lawful citizens and entering one in which, so far as their knowledge and authority went, they were interlopers, to dispossess the people who, so far as they could say, were the rightful owners of it.

They gathered a large crowd, and organized at St. Francis for their predatory movement. They elected their officers, issued arms, ammunition, and other outfits. All being ready, they marched down on Baton Rouge and took the place by surprise. That is, they made a murderous assault on the unsuspecting inhabitants, killed several of

them, including Louis Grandpré, son of the Governor, who with a few crippled veterans occupied the fort, and drove the others from their homes and lands.

Just how many were murdered by the onslaught of the American "patriots" the accounts do not specify; but the invaders chased the wretched survivors clear to Pensacola, seized the military post, and set up their own authority. But they were not yet satisfied. Mr. Pickett observes:

"As the Americans at this period, and for a long time previously, were fruitful in plans to form governments independent of the Union, so the 'patriots,' many of whom were old Spanish subjects, now resolved to have one of their own. A convention assembled which adopted a declaration of independence very similar in tone and sentiment to the one drawn by Thomas Jefferson. They declared their right and intention to form treaties and to establish commerce with foreign nations."

Apparently, they had renounced allegiance to the United States and spurned the Declaration of 1776.

With the spirit of ruthless conquerors, the creators of this new republic immediately began preparations to seize other Spanish territory, or at least, territory claimed by Spain, and the right to which was then a question in process of amicable adjustment between that government and their own. They proposed to capture and appropriate the District of Mobile. Rather strange, it seems at this day, and one reads with the expectation that the

Federal government would soon put a heavy hand on such wholesale outlawry against a friendly neighbor — and expects in vain. But our nation was then young.

However, the first thing Reuben Kemper did was to wreak vengeance on such of his kidnappers as he could find. It will be observed from their names, given on a previous page, that the offenders were not Spaniards. Indeed, it is doubtful if they were even Spanish subjects. They, or at least some of them, it is reasonable to believe, had come from the same part of Mississippi as the Kempers. Yet they had done the miserable work of the short-sighted Spanish governor.

A recital of the revolting details of the punishments inflicted upon those miserable men is hardly pardonable, and is indulged only to the extent and for the purpose of showing the fierce character of Reuben Kemper, a man whose lawlessness has found respectable apologists — who has even been lauded, like many others of his brutal breed, as a gallant knight of the frontier.

The first one captured was Kneeland. He was taken by Reuben and Samuel Kemper who, with the aid of hired assistants, tied him to a large tree, his arms pinioned around it. They then gave him one hundred lashes on the bare back. That was for themselves. Resting a minute, they resumed their work of vengeance and gave him one hundred additional lashes for their brother Nathan, who for some cause was denied the privilege of

partaking in the exercises. This, by the way, was the process originally known as lynching; in its early administration the term did not imply the death penalty,—a fact made clear in the border-time chronicles.

It is not stated in the original accounts of this affair whether the victim was still conscious after receiving the two hundred lashes, or able to walk; but whether he was or not, his torture was not yet complete. The unmerciful Kempers cut off both his ears with a dull knife, and then left him, to live if he could. And he did live. It was an act, this awful wreaking of vengeance, which shows the quality of hatred frequently engendered among the desperate citizens who predominated among the pioneers of the Southwest. Those amputated ears were long preserved in alcohol “and hung up by one of the Kempers in his parlor.” After settling with Kneeland they went after one of the Hortons, caught him, and lashed him after the approved method “as long as he could take it and live.” Then they looked up Bomer, found him in the court-room at Fort Adams while court was in session, took him from under the nose of the judge, dragged him out, and flayed him as vigorously as they had the others.

That seems to have been the end of their direful vengeance, although Captain Alston, to whom the Kempers had been delivered when they were taken over the Spanish line, suffered such severe exposure to the wintry elements, particularly by lying concealed in an open boat on the

river, in evading his hunters, that he died soon afterward of dropsy.

The cruelties of which the story has been given were not the acts of exceptionally hard characters of that time and region, but were committed by men who were leaders in influence and action; who commanded, then and subsequently, the respect and admiration of "the best families." Reuben Kemper came to be looked upon as a military hero (especially after his Texas exploits) and a true son of chivalry. Foote, himself a Mississippian and a prominent figure among the gentry of his State and once its Governor, declares in his history of Texas that Kemper was "a scion of noble Virginia stock, born in Fauquier County and worthy of it." In fact this author, one of the *élite* of his section, relates that when he was a boy of thirteen he last saw Colonel Kemper at the residence of William Wirt, the celebrated lawyer and politician, in Virginia, where the ex-buccaneer was an honored guest, to whom Wirt paid deferential courtesy. He himself "was constrained to render full tribute of youthful admiration to the towering Achilles-like form and majestic aspect and demeanor of the chivalrous Texan commander [Kemper, as will be seen, having, after the valiant deeds now being related, joined in operations against Texas]. How one who had attempted to carry into execution the liberating policy of Colonel Burr happened to find favor so far as to be invited to the house of his (Burr's) distinguished prosecutor, is more

than I can explain. I have always looked upon the incident as a little curious."

In sad truth, the spoliation and murder of Spanish subjects were not committed by desperadoes whose acts the gentry deplored, but by the gentry themselves; and there is enough in the chronicles of the generation to show that the specific cases of cruelties cited were all too common, being practised by contentious families and factions upon each other as freely as by the lynchers upon captured outlaws.

It is hardly a digression requiring apology to refer to Foote's characterization of Kemper, who was, during most of his life, engaged in brutal, criminal acts, — a profane braggart, a whiskey-guzzling, marauding, law-defying ruffian of the border. These were the real attributes of the man who was lauded as "the scion of noble Virginia stock and worthy of it." It is characteristic of the way too many of our state historians, especially those of the country under consideration, have had of treating frontier actors. Flagrant violations of justice, and acts even treasonable in their nature, are condoned or passed over with respectful acquiescence; the consequence being that in time all come to be regarded alike as pioneers of fortitude, invincible patriotism, and courage that always defended the right.

Only one history out of a dozen that should have done so tells of the buccaneer seizure of Baton Rouge. Others

refer to it merely as "border troubles," or dismiss it with the remark that "the Americans occupied the district." It is the same with the cyclopædias. As Blount's treasonable correspondence is withheld, so Shelby's connivance with traitors is minimized. Their names, and Innes's, Sebastian's, George Rogers Clark's, Moultrie's, and Elijah Clarke's, are put into the category with names that never were tainted with treason; and even Wilkinson's putrid record finds its scrivener whitewashers.

Reuben Kemper, after the onslaught on the Spaniards, had now distinguished himself sufficiently to have the title of colonel given him, and the "patriots" having decided to seize Mobile District in the same manner that they had Baton Rouge, the convention — acting as the new government — sent him up the Tombigbee for the purpose of enlisting a company to assist in the new enterprise. These recruits, as well as the other invaders, were all sturdy sons of liberty. The hatred of all the people of that valley country for the Spaniard facilitated Reuben's operations. He was readily joined by Colonel Joseph Caller, a man of wealth and influence, with whom Kemper lodged. These two raised troops secretly, loaded flatboats with arms and provisions, and sent them down the Tensaw River.

A Major Kennedy now joined the scheme; and he and Kemper collected a company of horse. Just how large a force they succeeded in raising does not appear.

Probably it was not formidable in numbers, but neither were the peaceable, law-abiding people they were to operate against. When they arrived at a point then known as White House, they bivouacked, and were joined by a company of original "patriots" from Baton Rouge.

Kemper, the chief in command, now sent a letter to the Spanish Governor of the district, Folch, demanding a surrender. Folch was fortified in the town of Mobile. He could hardly have been ignorant during the several weeks past of what the Americans were up to, although he had lately taken command here. He seems to have treated the demand with contempt; and the actions of the invaders do not indicate that they possessed either courage or military skill. They camped, pioneer fashion, and after a while appointed a Doctor Holmes to captain a party of the volunteers and scour the country around for more provisions, arms, and apparently anything of value they could take. It was guerilla warfare. The inhabitants who suffered from the raid were Spanish subjects, and were entitled to the belief that their District was rightfully a Spanish possession. They were not at all dissatisfied with the Spanish rule, for it exacted no onerous duties of them as it did from the Americans with whom they traded. They had no desire to aid the invaders, and secreted their valuables as best they could.

Finally, the command "dropped down to the old fields near Minette Bay," fairly opposite Mobile, appropriating

provisions and forage of the residents as they went, like any Hessians. But they did not attack; and they must have remained here for some time, as they were again becoming needy, when they were rejoiced by the coming down the river of a Captain Goss with a keelboat loaded with whiskey, corn, flour, bacon, and other encouragement which the convention at Baton Rouge had considerably sent to its army of conquest. It had been steered through the lakes and bayous. The supplies, notably the whiskey, stimulated the ardor and loyalty of the whole outfit, but instead of attacking the fortifications like real men of war they fell into the truly patriotic habit of making glowing speeches. The thrilling climax to these orations was always where the speaker pointed across to the ancient city which they would soon, by their prowess and other mighty qualities, capture and possess.

But this sort of warfare, with almost an entire lack of army discipline, began to be demoralizing. Quarrels sprang up; there was a little promiscuous knifing, and some shooting frays; cold rains fell, and the "army" was without tents. And still the Governor of the coveted Spanish post declined to honor their surrender demand.

At length a Major Hargrove, whose military genius brightened with the stress of the occasion, took part of the command, and proceeded by boat twelve miles above Mobile, boldly facing possible disasters from alligators and driftwood. Having made this heroic voyage, they entered

the historic bayou of Saw Mill Creek. This move proved a triumph, for here they found a fresh supply of whiskey, and also some fiddles ; and straightway the hardy veterans entered upon a course of frolics. They were to wait here for Colonel Kemper, who had retained command of the cavalry, what there was of it, and who was to swing that division around the town by the cut-off and join them. What advantage was to accrue from these brilliant manœuvres the records fail to explain ; nor is it known what movement was intended next, for the reason that their plans and jolly roistering were interfered with most rudely.

The story goes that an evil old man — a Spanish subject, of course — who had visited the patriot camp and often drank with the besiegers, went one night to Governor Folch and told him how easy it would be to rush the invaders and capture the whole force. The Governor does not seem to have displayed the qualities of a Fabius any more than Kemper had those of a Hannibal ; for up to this time he had not made a move. Now he sent Colonel Paredes, the sub-commandant, with about two hundred men, troops and citizens, in boats up the river late one night, and they silently entered Saw Mill Creek to within a few rods of the Americans' camp. The latter were dancing and drinking and waking the night echoes, and had no sentinels on watch. The Mobiliers gave no hint of their coming, but suddenly, from out the darkness

mixed with canebrake, they fired on the unsuspecting fiddling American invaders, killed four of them, wounded a number, and put the rest to flight like a pack of rabbits.

At a considerable distance Major Hargrove rallied some of those least frightened, and returned to contest the field. He put up a weak fight, however, and was soon overpowered. He and nine of his men were captured, placed in irons, carried down to Mobile, and thrown into a calaboose. After a time to ponder they were shipped to Havana and there placed in Morro Castle.

Cyrus Sibley, another of the marauders, was subsequently captured and recognized as the man who had brought to the Governor Kemper's impudent despatch demanding capitulation, and was sent to join his fellow-patriots in Morro. They all remained in that retirement for five years. The robustious Kemper, who had blatantly sworn to rid the American continent of the Spaniards, was entirely eclipsed. He and his followers who escaped capture made no further attempt to take Mobile. Yet he continued a freebooter.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Insensibility of the American Government to Wrongs Committed by Southwesterners — Buccaneers not even Rebuked — First Secession Utterances in Congress — Opposition to National Growth.*



THE independent government which Kemper and his fellow-buccaneers set up, including the power arrogated to it of making treaties and exercising other national functions, appears to have been somewhat for speculative purposes; for very soon they began trying to strike a bargain over it

with the United States. This exhibition of effrontery was not resented by the government.

The remarkable declaration of independence which they promulgated was ostensibly by "The Representatives of the People of West Florida." That is what they called

themselves. The document reads as if it were the utterance of the people living in the district who had by their own act rebelled for righteous causes and overthrown the authority of Spain. Some of the people involved in the usurpation lived in the district, yet by far the most of them were residents of the Territory of Mississippi. Practically all of them were Americans, and not Spanish subjects. They took it into their own hands to enter the disputed district, to make war, murder or expel the inhabitants, and subvert the government — “appealing to the Supreme Ruler of the world for the rectitude of our intentions.”

They forwarded a copy of this impious declaration to the President of the United States. One John Rhea, who had been elected president of the West Florida convention, addressed a communication to the Secretary of State in which he prayed for annexation of “the Commonwealth of West Florida” to the United States. He stipulated, however, on behalf of the people of his commonwealth, for all the unlocated lands within its limits, to which he asserted they were entitled as a reward for having wrested the government and country from Spain at the risk of their lives and fortunes !

It seems as though they were seeking to federate with the Union rather than to enter it as one of the States. At least they demanded special privileges, and among their stipulations were those for unqualified pardons for all

deserters from the American army and navy then residing within the "commonwealth," a most significant demand, together with exemption from further service in the army or navy of the Union.

On mature reflection these precious outlaws must have marvelled at their own moderation in not levelling any threat of vengeance against the United States, should that government not comply. The only intimation of their power was that as a federated State it would add to the prestige and strength, as well as the prosperity, of the Federal Union! Not on the American continent has anything more impudent been done by a few hundred lawless adventurers, and one eagerly reads on to discover what action the government took concerning it.

There is nothing to show that the declaration was not received by the President, and Rhea's address by the Secretary of State, with any other than respectful consideration! Not a suggestion of punishment, not even a rebuke! President Madison, after consulting with the cabinet, decided that the government must take immediate possession of the District of West Florida, and on Oct. 27, 1810, issued a proclamation. In view of the facts as shown, and of the admission by the President as to disputed territory and uncompleted negotiations, this proclamation is as startling to a straight-thinking American of to-day as the declaration of the Kemperites.

It declares the described territory, of which possession

was not delivered to the United States with Louisiana, had been considered and claimed as part of Louisiana. That the acquiescence of the United States in the temporary continuance of the territory under Spanish authority was not because of any distrust of our title, but was occasioned by our conciliatory views, and by a confidence in the justice of our cause, and in the success of amicable negotiations with a just and friendly power. "And whereas a satisfactory adjustment too long delayed, without the fault of the United States, has for some time been entirely suspended by events over which they had no control; and whereas a crisis has at length arrived, subversive of the order of things under the Spanish authorities, whereby a failure of the United States to take the said territory into its possession may lead to events ultimately contravening the views of both parties; whilst in the meantime the tranquillity and security of our adjoining territories are endangered, and new facilities given to violators of our revenue and commercial laws, and of those prohibiting the introduction of slaves"; and further, considering that further forbearance of the United States to take hold might be construed into a dereliction of their title, or an insensibility of the importance of the stake; considering also that in the hands of the United States it will not cease to be a subject of fair and friendly adjustment, the President, in pursuance of these mighty and urgent considerations, has deemed it right and requisite that possession

be taken of the said territory by the United States ; and that W. C. C. Claiborne, Governor of Orleans Territory, of which said Territory is to be taken as part, exercise over it the authorities and functions legally appertaining to his office. And the good people were to be obedient under assurance of protection of liberty, property, and religion !

In its studied evasion of the enormity of the offence which had been committed against Spain, “a just and friendly power,” its mixture of truth and error, shifty excusings, and patronizing innuendo, the paper is more worthy a Talleyrand than the chief executive of the American Union.

This was the extent of the retribution coming to Kemper and his party, so far as the sovereign power of the national government was concerned. Spain must have been highly edified at the touching confidence expressed in the results of amicable negotiation and ultimate happy arrangement of the matter. Strangely enough, Spain made little outcry, the reason being, as indicated by one of the speakers on the subject in Congress some time later, that she was too submerged in trouble at home to pay any attention to it.

But England, then the ally of Spain, did object. Mr. Morier, British minister at Washington, expressed deep regret at the determination to take West Florida, title to which was manifestly doubtful, — according to

the President's proclamation it was open to discussion. But without discussing that, why could not it have been adjusted without committing an act of hostility? Merely because Spain was then unequal to quell the rebellious band of desperadoes known by the contemptuous appellation of land-jobbers! Mr. Morier did not mince words, even if his folks did live in a glass house. And then he read this lecture to the American government, striking in its sarcasm and unveiled contempt:

“Would it not have been worthy of the generosity of a free nation like this, bearing, as it doubtless does, a respect for the rights of a gallant people engaged in a noble struggle for liberty,—would it not have been an act on the part of this country, dictated by the sacred ties of good neighborhood and friendship which exist between it and Spain, to have assisted Spain rather than to have made such interference the pretext for wresting a province from her in the time of her adversity?”

Mr. Morier went further, intimating that his government and Spain were allies, and that Great Britain could not see with indifference any attack upon her interests in America. He demanded an explanation. But as the United States counted on war with England very soon (it came in two years) she did not take the trouble to give one.

However, the outrage was not approved by all Americans. The subject split Congress, but more as a political question

—for or against the administration. The controversies arising from this disgraceful seizure of territory are of unusual historical interest, not only because the wrong involved was so generally disregarded, but for the fact that it aroused the first debates over national expansion, and occasioned the first expression of secession sentiment heard in either chamber.

One senator said it was agreed by all parties that we ought to have the country which had been taken. They differed only as to the mode of acquiring it. The act of the Executive was a matter of expediency. If we did not take possession and give the people the protection of the American government, and if they had sought it of a foreign power, he (the President) would have been charged with fear and imbecility. And then, considering it as an emergency, the honorable senator asked: "*Are we to sit here and cavil about questions of right?*"

An anti-administration senator declared the proclamation was a declaration of war, and an act of legislation also, — it annexed territory in dispute, created a Governor, enacted laws, and appropriated money. It seemed to him as if President Madison had n't left anything for Congress to do. Besides, what had Spain done to provoke this act of aggression? Was it that she had lately sent a minister to express her friendly disposition to treat with us for both the Floridas, and to pay what she owed us for spoliations? . . . Why should we depart from the great system of

conduct which had been the pride, the safety, and the boast of our country, of faith, of justice, of peace? — and much more in the same strain. But the President was sustained in the Senate by a large majority. The acts of the buccaneers were hardly once condemned, or mentioned with disapproval, — only the act of the Executive in taking advantage of it.

In the House the debate ran higher ; but the matter of forcible seizure by land-robbers was entirely lost in the fog of discussion of constitutional questions involving the authority of the United States ever to extend her territory, or to add new States to the original thirteen. The opposition was led by Josiah Quincy, of Massachusetts, who was in those days engaged in the continuous performance of leading the little band of Federalists against the administration strongholds. His utterances make strange reading for an American citizen of to-day. Little did Kemper dream, when he started out after the blood and possessions of the Spaniards, that his acts would lead to such heights of controversy over constitutional limitations.

It was pointed out that the President declared to the world that title to the district involved should be subject to adjustment by mutual arrangement hereafter to be entered into between the United States and Spain, while the bill before Congress provided for annexation of the district to the State which it was proposed to form out of the lower part of the Territory of Louisiana. What

power had the government to negotiate about the territory of any one of the States? None!

Still the great moral question did not come up. The senator who asked if they were to cavil about mere questions of right, in the face of expediency, need not have disturbed himself. Nobody in the Congress of liberty-loving America took the trouble to do so. The wrangle — and a memorable one it was — raged only over constitutional authority and restrictions. Mr. Quincy, who all his life posed on a moral pedestal, had not a word to say against freebooting, or murder, or the driving of a friendly people from their homes. His argument was that of the narrowest of political provincials, and no anti-expansionist of Massachusetts or elsewhere of later days has equalled him in uncompromising opposition to national growth.

It must be remembered that the debate had now turned on the question of admitting a new State — Louisiana. The proposition to add a State to the Union — to increase the original family of thirteen by a single addition — filled Mr. Quincy with distress. The principle of the bill — admitting new territory — appeared to him, he said, to justify a revolution in the land! It affected the liberties and rights of the whole people of the United States — that is, the original thirteen. He was almost tempted to leave, without a struggle, his country to its fate!

While it is not the purpose here to follow the debate, the quotation of some of the remarks of the principals

who engaged in it, pro and con, on the particular subject, cannot be much of a digression from the story.

Mr. Quincy continued to deny any right under the Constitution to extend the original limits of the United States by the admission of States. To attempt to do so, he declared, was an atrocious and manifest usurpation of power by the three branches of the government. The Constitution was a political compact between thirteen States. No more could be admitted without shattering the instrument. *To admit a new State would dissolve the Union! "For then the States that compose it will be free from their moral obligations, and that, as it will be the right of all, so it will be the duty of some, definitely to prepare for a separation, amicably if they can, violently if they must!"*

The future president of Harvard University struck the limit of secession doctrine, — that it would be the duty of some States to secede if Congress should pass a bill adding a foot of ground to the original territory. Four States had already been added to the original thirteen since the adoption of the Constitution, but they had been carved out of the territory held at that time. This, the proposed admission of Louisiana out of a purchased province, was the first move toward the extension of the national domain in the statehood. Mr. Quincy's violent words were not the unguarded utterance of passion. Upon objection being made, he wrote them down and sent them to the desk, so there would be no misunderstanding.

Did Josiah Quincy believe that the act should dissolve the Union? The explanation of his monstrous sentiments, based on such a construction of the Constitution, probably lies in the fact that the people of his State and of New England were then in bitter opposition to the embargo laid on their maritime commerce by the President, and that many of them were talking about withdrawing from the Union because of the hardship it imposed on those States. That Representative Quincy was looking forward to secession, and thus grasped this occasion to raise another and a more dignified justification than an embargo for the course he believed his constituents might take, is a supposition that, however damaging to his patriotism, does less violence to his intelligence than the absurd doctrine concerning the Constitution which he professed to hold.

It seems a strange paradox, in the light of history that has since been made, that the member to call Mr. Quincy to order for his seditious utterances was from Mississippi. Mr. Poindexter earnestly declared it was radically wrong for any member to use arguments to dissolve the government, and questioned the right of a member to invite any portion of the people to insurrection and a dissolution of the Union.

The speaker ruled the treasonable utterances contrary to the order of debate, but Mr. Quincy appealed to the House, which (probably wanting to hear to what lengths

the New Englander would go) reversed the decision. A long controversy ensued, in which Mr. Quincy declared the people of New Orleans and of Louisiana never had been citizens of the United States, and by the mode proposed, never would be. He indulged in a good deal of other talk which sounds so utterly foolish now as to make it seem uncharitable to quote it against him. He appeared to fear the development of the West, as many narrow-visioned residents of the Atlantic States did at that time.

“Why,” he exclaimed in his oratorical spasm against the Louisiana bill, “are we to have representatives of a people fifteen hundred miles away legislating here for Massachusetts? Are savages along the banks of the Mississippi to be given a voice in our government?”

Mr. Poindexter taunted Mr. Quincy about a declaration that the latter had made in a previous debate, to the effect that the people of New England were prepared for insurrection and revolt unless the embargo was repealed; adding that the British minister to the United States had reported that utterance made on the floor of the House, and had informed his government that the dissolution of the Union was a probable event.

The bill passed by a large majority.

The District under dispute, which the Spaniards called Baton Rouge, and which Kemper and his fellow-buccaneers called, after their seizure of it, West Florida, was that

block of land lying between the Mississippi River, the State of Mississippi, and the Gulf of Mexico. Out of it subsequently were carved the parishes of East Baton Rouge, St. Helena, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Livingston, and Washington.

## CHAPTER IX

*The Magee Expedition — Soldier and Filibuster — Glory Leads toward Mexico — The “Republican Army of the North” — Success of the Invaders — Strange Death of the Leader.*



AUGUSTUS MAGEE, lieutenant in the United States army, set on foot the next enterprise for the conquest of Texas.

In 1811 there was a scandalous state of affairs on the Texas-Louisiana border. It will be remembered that in 1806 the Spaniards under Herrera and the

Americans under Wilkinson were all but in collision over the boundary line; and that, owing to Wilkinson's desire to get away to betray his friend Burr, he patched up a peculiar peace with his antagonist whereby a "neutral ground" was established. This was a strip of wild country between

the Sabine River and the Arrondo Hoyo. The agreement was that so long as both countries claimed it neither should have it, at least for a while. After other things were out of the way, the two nations might come together and settle this difference, but in the meantime the neutral ground was to remain a wilderness.

It was a foolish proposition ; but it will not be forgotten that a brief quarter-century before it had been the avowed policy of Spain to keep Louisiana a wilderness as a safeguard to Texas and Mexico. And just a year before Wilkinson's treaty our commissioners at Madrid, Monroe and Pinckney, proposed to the Spanish government that the two nations establish a territory comprising thirty leagues on both sides of the Colorado River which should remain unsettled forever. This was on the theory that, with such a dead strip between the two provinces, there would be no border difficulties,—no clothesline quarrels to be settled in the national police courts.

But Spain would not accept the proposal, and therein showed her good sense. For the temporary neutral ground as established by the commanders in the field soon became a paradise for the lawless. Highwaymen, murderers, horse-thieves, and brigands of the most desperate and degraded type made the land their retreat. As it belonged to nobody now they were comparatively safe from arrest. What made the matter worse, it may be, Spain had interrupted diplomatic relations with the United States from 1808 to

1815. Napoleon had practically blotted her out for a time. At last the Sabine River was agreed upon as the boundary, and the treaty confirming it was signed Feb. 21, 1819.

But in the meantime there was trouble on the border. It was about as much as a trader's life was worth to attempt to pass it with any valuables. It got so bad that traders from Mexico, on reaching the west bank of the Sabine, would sometimes send for a military escort to conduct them to Natchitoches. This duty fell to Lieutenant Magee.

The story of Augustus Magee is different from that of all the other fame-seekers by conquest in the early Southwest; and although it is devoid of any romance of the heart, so far as known, it excites a deeply pathetic interest. The very fact that his brief life in the wilds, with an environment more befitting a corsair than a man of culture, was unsoftened and uncheered by woman's love when the star of his rash ambition waned, makes his career the more regrettable.

He was born in Massachusetts, and was of good family. About all that the histories tell of his early life is that he entered West Point, and was graduated in January, 1809. Receiving an appointment as second lieutenant of artillery, he was ordered to Louisiana, where Wilkinson still had command. It is a striking fact that every adventurer who, during a quarter of a century or more, entered upon

daring aggressions against the Spanish possessions, had been under that man's evil influence. For a while Lieutenant Magee was stationed at New Orleans. After some two years of somewhat inactive army life he was sent by Major Wolstoncroft to Natchitoches, the most westerly army post of the region.

Magee's principal duty here was, as already indicated, the protection of travellers from the cutthroats of the neutral ground, near the eastern border of which his post was situated. It was merely border police duty, of a very uninteresting sort to an ambitious young soldier. A report of some deviltry would be received, and away he would go with a squad of troopers and chase about in an execrable desert for the depredators — whom he seldom could catch. Then he would go back to the isolated little fort and loll the hours away till the next call on him was made. As a matter of fact, it was doubtful whether, under the treaty agreement, he had any right to enter the sequestered district and arrest anybody.

Once in a while he would catch some of the brigands, and then he did not waste time reading up laws and regulations to ascertain just how far he was authorized to go in the matter of chastisement. Extremes were good enough for such as he dealt with. This is illustrated by the happenings when he went across to Salitre on the Texas side, to meet and escort a company of Mexican traders through the robbers' kingdom to Natchitoches.

The roads were mere traces, and most of the traffic of that and previous times being of a contraband nature, these were called "contraband traces." Many of the highway-men had established themselves in the bad lands as "squatters," with their families, ostensibly for hunting and small farming. All marauded alike on the Americans and Mexicans who came their way, although their affections inclined more to the latter, as they were usually better supplied with specie, and also because they could, as a rule, be robbed with greater impunity. A peculiar illustration of the fascination of lucre — the desire to possess the thing itself! One would have supposed that, living in that dreary country without commerce or production, the capture of a load of provisions or other supplies, which usually come as godsend to remote habitations, would have been the most desirable booty; but no, the rascals preferred the silver, although it is difficult to understand what good they could get out of it in their situation.

On the occasion noted, young Magee met the Mexican train, which had an unusual quantity of silver, and was especially desirous of protection. All went safely under convoy of the lieutenant until they reached the small streamlet of La Nan. This was pretty well over toward the American side, and not so very far from Natchitoches. Here a gang of thirteen of the robbers, no doubt having full information concerning the trading party, sprang from

an ambuscade on both sides of the road, completely surprising the party.

Magee and his men were slightly in advance, and were just starting to cross the stream, which here made a sharp bend. It was an ideal place for such an attack. The banditti fired from the cover of the thickets, and several of the small caravan were killed. Magee and the troop being now across the rivulet, saw their charge, the unfortunate traders, surrounded. A fight ensued, but the situation was such that the soldiers were as likely to kill the travellers by their fire, as they were the outlaws. It is suspected, too, that Magee's men did not behave with the valor expected of them, and from the accounts it would seem that the lieutenant himself was censurable on the charge of carelessness, although nothing of the sort is hinted at in the histories.

The Mexicans were captured, the outlaws getting the better of the debate, and Magee, finding himself outclassed, retreated in hot speed to his post. Here he secured a larger force, and the following day went back after the desperadoes. In the meantime the traders had been despoiled of both silver and goods. Having got their booty, the brigands took the silver and buried it for present safety—there being a considerable quantity of it—along the bank of the river. The details of this deposit were attended to, for business reasons, by the two leaders of the gang, while the others were guarding the

prisoners and mules. Then the Mexicans — those who survived — were sent back homeward, and the robbers dispersed themselves, suspicious of what might be coming.

By this time brigandage had thriven so well, and so many had entered the godless field of plunder, that a sort of organization, or union, had been effected to keep the industry within desirable restrictions. They had headquarters (somewhat elusive, to be sure), outposts, and captains. Magee had learned all this. He knew what he had to contend with, but he was determined to inflict punishment on some of the criminals. He made a sweep through their domain of deviltry, burnt some of their houses and caught some of their horses, but for a time failed to capture any of his former assailants. Finally, he overtook the two chiefs. The brazen rascals had actually started by a roundabout trace for Natchitoches to dispose of such of the merchandise as they did not want for their own use; counting, apparently, on not being recognized, and posing as reputable dealers.

But the lieutenant was not to be fooled. He proceeded summarily by having them tied to trees and flogged to make them disclose the whereabouts of their associates, who Magee supposed must have the silver. In spite of severe lashing the captives would reveal nothing; and then the lieutenant tried another method of persuasion. He had coals of fire passed up and down their naked and lacerated backs — something like a free operation of the

moxa. Whether or not live coals on the spine can add anything to the discomfort of a man who has just received a hundred whistling lashes, the recipients of the treatment still refused to divulge anything, either about their comrades or the spelter. And Lieutenant Magee, being weary by that time, took the wretches along to Natchitoches and turned them over to the civil authorities for punishment.

The guilty ones were tried forthwith and as promptly convicted, each being sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. It is remarkable, considering the circumstances and the time, that they should have escaped the death penalty; and there is some cause to suspect that it was owing to the severe torture they had undergone at the hands of the military. They were serving their sentence when the second war with Great Britain came on; and late in 1813, when the British were menacing New Orleans, and every effort was being made to raise troops hastily for the defence—it took time in those days to move regiments long distances—they were offered a pardon if they would enlist in the service. One of the convicts readily agreed, and was one of the heroes who overcame the British on the memorable eighth of January.

The other fellow stubbornly refused the pardon proposition, having other projects in his head. He served his time out, and then entered upon a business career of a less dangerous kind than his former one.

The robbers who attacked Magee, and who escaped

him, returned in due time to the scene of their successful action to make search for the hidden silver. Circumstances not subject to their control forbidding them from communicating with their former chiefs, they were forced to conduct their quest at haphazard. They might almost as well have been blindfolded. They went up and down La Nan Creek from the curve which they remembered well as the exact spot where the affray took place. They inspected every foot of the banks, both sides, burrowed in all the inaccessible crannies, and dug the gravelly places in the stream. They searched deep and shallow, did those hopeful brigands, tried the witch hazel and other conjuring, but never the chink of a good dollar did they hear, and not a coin did they find.

However, the ex-convict, after his time was out, remembered well enough. Immediately upon regaining his liberty he went and dug up the whole treasure bright and clean. With it he went over to Georgia and entered the slave-driving business. Buying a band of blacks, he would chain them in a gang, drive them to where the demand made higher prices, and sell at a profit. After a few deals of this kind he bought a lot and took them to Texas. The chronicle relates that, having entered legitimate pursuits, he likewise reformed his manners, and became a reputable citizen. Being among the first colonists in the land of his former exploits (now reduced to greater security) he established himself as a planter, lived as a real

gentleman of the slave-holding class, and died a few years before the Texas revolution, much lamented by the aristocracy of his section. To be sure, there was now and then a whisper, — but for that, there are gentlemen even to-day with records that are dim.

Magee at this time was only about twenty-four years old, yet one of the Texas historians speaks of him as “a leader of tried fidelity and valor,” and says that he ultimately thrashed the outlaws till they sued for pardon and promised better conduct in the future. Even so, the humdrum occupation of disciplining a nestful of border robbers, and then sitting around in the shade of a mud fort waiting till another mule was stolen, was not his idea of winning distinction.

He is credited in the books with having been “a man of more than ordinary accomplishments.” It is altogether probable that he was conversant with the events of his day. An ambitious young soldier, he no doubt was influenced, as were thousands of others in all parts of the world, by the blaze of Napoleon’s glory, — that lonesome genius being just then at the very zenith of his greatness. He had heard, from his boyhood, stories of the schemes of conquest of Genet. He had learned what the real objects of Wilkinson and of Burr were. There still was Texas, and beyond, chaotic Mexico. There was already arising a clamor for entrance upon the fertile lands of the vast province which he was now serving at the threshold. Of

the mighty possibilities of the future he dreamed on idle days at the frontier post.

Magee was set dreaming by something more potent than the rich red poppies in the gardens of the Southwest. And in this mood he became acquainted with Bernardo Gutierrez, a former colonel in the Mexican insurgent army of the gallant Hidalgo. This man had, after the defeat of Hidalgo, sought asylum and assistance in the United States. The asylum he found was broad, the assistance meagre. Americans, themselves not yet opulent, had wearied of lending aid to patriots who had fled from Mexico and South America. There had been something too much of it. So Gutierrez was keeping out of the clutches of Spain, and doing the next best thing he could.

Whatever scheme Magee had been revolving in his mind was no doubt hurried to definite formation by his association with Bernardo. At any rate, it was but a short time before the Mexican was announcing a plan for the invasion of Texas. Proposals were published for raising the "Army of the North." It was in the name of the Mexican, but everybody knew that young Lieutenant Magee was the power and influence behind it. Now transpires a strange part of the business. Magee made a tour through the neutral grounds, saw the leaders of the freebooters and knights of the contraband traces, notified them of the expedition of conquest which he was organizing, and

invited them and their fellows to join it. Scores of them did so. In fact, it appears from some accounts that this select body of banditti was the nucleus of his organization.

But recruiting began also in Louisiana, and among the few advance settlers who had stolen into Texas and who were fearful of the insecure conditions. They had confidence in the country, and believed it ought to be wrested from Spanish rule; were enthused over Magee's glittering forecast — a separate nation, sudden development of wealth and power, and the possibilities of turning the Spaniards out of Mexico! It was the old prospect, and appealed to many besides the desperate. There was the well-to-do Davenport and his partner, Barr, ranchmen who had stores at Angelina. Davenport became chief commissary of the expedition, and influenced other men of means to subscribe to the fund for it. Magee, early in the movement, went to New Orleans and enlisted a number of young men, mostly dare-devil fellows who could be easily induced into any kind of adventure. Whether he had secured leave of absence for this journey of several hundred miles cannot be ascertained from any of the published records concerning him; but it is certain that he yet held his commission. The question presents itself as to the possibility of his superior officers having knowledge at this time of his acts and intentions. It is not a rash presumption that one or more of them must have had, yet it is

not borne out by the evidence, any further than that Magee had previously come in contact with General Wilkinson.

In the proposal for troops, pay at the rate of forty dollars per month was offered, besides which each volunteer was to be given a league of land — nearly six thousand acres — in the new Dominion. This was several times more liberal than the allurements set forth in the Genet proposals. And if, in considering the purpose of the would-be conqueror to establish a landed aristocracy, it is urged that he was starting with a base lot of followers on whom to bestow such rewards, it may be remembered that aristocracies have been established on foundations of similar material.

Volunteers were notified to rally at the Saline, east of the Sabine River, on June 12. On the date set, one hundred and fifty-eight men came together, of whom it is said a majority were from the “neutral ground.” That the main expectation of these willing ruffians was to enjoy plundering upon a more liberal scale without so much danger of being punished for it, did not detract from their usefulness in the eyes of Magee and Gutierrez. They were hardy, fearless, and well armed. And it is much credit to young Magee’s resoluteness that they were brought to submit to military discipline. An organization was effected, and drilling began. By the time the expedition was ready to move, the “Republican Army of

the North" had been increased to about three hundred men in the ranks.

In this rather motley army there were a number of men of recognized respectability, notably Doctor Forsyth, of Mississippi, and Captain Ross from the same State; Captain McKim, who wrote an account of the expedition, never published; Captain Perry, from New Orleans, who is reported to have been related to the famous sea-fighters of that name; Captain Joseph Taylor, and Colonel Davenport, already mentioned; and there was also Reuben Kemper, of Baton Rouge notoriety, posing as the most desperate hater of "Spanish tyranny" in America. It was, of course, the ostensible object of the army to coöperate with and assist the revolutionary patriots in Mexico, but in reality it was the conquest of Texas, and after that to decide, in accordance with their strength and resources, as to what should be done about Mexico.

For the purpose of lending the color of legitimacy to the movement, and to win the submission of the republican sympathizers in Texas, Gutierrez was made the nominal commander, with the title of general. Magee was next in authority, with the rank of colonel, and was in reality the man who issued the directions. It was arranged for him to remain awhile at Natchitoches and attend to the forwarding of supplies, while Gutierrez was to fight his way as far as Spanish Bluffs, on the Trinity River, and there await further orders.

Bernardo Gutierrez was an impressive talker against oppression and in glorification of the blessings of liberty. But when it came to action in the tented field, he was not a typical revolutionary terror. He was stout, fond of his ease, and fonder still of good eating and drinking ; which qualities in him should not be lost sight of in estimating the credit for the army's achievements, or the blame for its reverses.

The first engagement occurred at Salitre Prairie. Here they encountered an inferior force of Spanish regulars, which, however, consisted mainly of Mexican half-breeds, or Indians. The defenders were worsted and scattered, leaving a number dead, although their exact loss is not given. The conquerors lost two killed and three wounded, but were elated with their victory. It augured the success of their enterprise ; and a despatch was immediately sent to Magee giving him the details of the encounter.

The defeated Spaniards fled to Nacogdoches and began the construction of fortifications overlooking the hamlet, the principal material used being bales of wool, which were intended for the New Orleans market. But the invaders, flushed with their initial success, were quick after them, and their coming sent such terror into the hearts of the Spaniards that, although in a protected position, they fled before a round had been fired at them. Evidently the American conquerors had an intimidating way. The royalists retreated through the town, and such impetus

had the sight of the enemy given them, that they did not halt till they arrived at Spanish Bluffs.

The conquerors had already made a valuable capture. They took all the wool at this place and sent it to Magee at Natchitoches, where it was sold, and the proceeds used in the purchase of army supplies. Then the army continued on its march after the retreating enemy. Things were coming easy. Besides the start the wool gave them, Colonel Davenport, who had not been idle, although not yet with the army, sent forward twenty mule-loads of flour, bacon, salt, and other provender, including forty bushels of cornmeal. Some of these supplies came from New Orleans, where the colonel operated, and where the scheme of conquest was aided and abetted.

On June 22, some months after he had engaged in his grand enterprise, Lieutenant Magee resigned his commission in the United States army. He had deferred this until the feasibility of the expedition seemed assured; but now he could see the future empire surely widening before him. He now set out with a few recruits that he had enlisted to join his army at Spanish Bluffs. He was something of a soldier. At the crossing of the Sabine he left behind him Captain Joseph Gaines to forward such additional volunteers as might be secured, and keep a communication open with Natchitoches and his own country.

When the invading army reached Spanish Bluffs they

found the old fort — a mere adobe fortification — occupied by about four hundred of the enemy. These all fled at the approach of the conquerors, as they had done at Nacogdoches. A considerable quantity of stores and ammunition thus fell into the hands of the Americans, who now began to feel themselves invincible. They welcomed the young chief, Magee, vociferously. Everybody was in “high feather and feed.” The ex-highwaymen had forgotten their prejudice against the ex-lieutenant, and they were all happy conquerors together.

The army remained in this pleasant situation one month. In the meantime something was in the air across the plains. The Governor of Texas, Don Manuel de Salcedo, — brother to him who put a sudden stop to Nolan’s raid, — together with the aid of ex-Governor Cordero and Don Simon Herrera, Governor of New Leon, loyal royalists all, with something of a knack at warfare, were collecting a royalist force and fortifying La Bahia and San Antonio. The civil war in Mexico had not terminated with the shooting of Hidalgo. Morelos, another patriot priest, had, as we have seen, raised the standard of independence in the Southern provinces, aided by a rancorous American, Bean. At the same time Victoria, another rebel, was worrying the Viceroy with an insurrection of his own near Jalapa. The republicans still had an organization and a junta. Calleja, the Alva of Mexico, had butchered and applied the torch wherever independence and liberty had

been advocated, and had besieged Morelos at Quatte Amilpas, seventy-five miles from Mexico City.

So it is seen that the royalist government of Mexico was not in need of going away from home for excitement, and that Magee had chosen an opportune time to strike for Texas. His first successes fired the adventurous heart all through the Southwest, and before he left Spanish Bluffs his army had increased to about eight hundred. It was here that Kemper joined him with a company, and was commissioned a major. Finally he left the Bluffs, marched westward, and crossed the Colorado River. On the route his scouts captured several Spanish spies, from whom he learned that Salcedo was in command at La Bahia with fourteen hundred troops, and that it was his hope to ambush the Americans when they attempted to cross the Guadalupe. Now, that being true, and Salcedo coming down the river to set a trap, it was likely that La Bahia would be left in a weak condition.

So the wily American declined to go by the way where the ambush was placed for him, but marched his army rapidly by a circuitous route and came down on La Bahia from an unexpected direction. The place was found defended by only one hundred and sixty men, and they, being so greatly overpowered, soon surrendered. Here the "Republican Army of the North" found itself in command of the largest magazine of stores, including ammunition, in

Texas, and, what was even more to the joy of the troops, of the enemy's military chest.

Besides all this, they captured sixteen pieces of artillery of all calibres, among them being several of historic interest. They were those brought by La Salle to San Bernardo in 1685. The money in the chest enabled the commanders to pay the volunteers all back dues. It now looked exceedingly promising for the conquerors. They had reached the heart of Texas without a reverse or even a serious engagement. The enemy had been beaten and outwitted. It was true they had not yet met the real army of defence, and that the Governor was near by with a superior force, according to reports; but they were in possession of his principal stores and artillery, and the loss of his cash would no doubt embarrass him seriously. Surely nothing more satisfactory could have been hoped for by Colonel Magee in his fondest dreams.

Yet already there was suspicion that all was not perfectly healthy and harmonious in the much-officered army. It is difficult to say just what. Not unlikely it was partly the conflict of authority between Gutierrez and Magee. The Mexican exile was growing overbearing. He had little military skill; his training as a soldier had been of the bushwhacking kind. On the other hand, Magee had been educated in the principal military academy on the continent, and had had two or three years' practical experience under capable leaders. And besides, the expedition being

a thing of his own creation, it is not to be marvelled at that he was firm in asserting himself.

Gutierrez began to cultivate exclusiveness. He kept in his tent much of the time, and had special attention given to the meals prepared for him. It is not remarkable that the troops, contemplating the character of many of them, should have inclined more to favor the easy authority of such a leader than the severe discipline insisted upon by Magee. Perhaps they were becoming a trifle spoiled by prosperity. Every man had money in his pocket, and was bountifully fed. Such things, and not enough hard fighting, are apt to prove harmful to an army. But they were soon to have business more strenuous.

Salcedo, being now in narrow straits, had to do his fighting quickly if he did it at all. He attacked the fort with his full strength. The conquerors sallied out and drove him back, meeting with slight loss. The Governor then divided his force into four divisions, placing one on each bank of the San Antonio River above and below the fort, and then sat down to a siege. The Americans erected bastions of earth upon which they mounted the guns found in the fort, and also three six-pounders which they brought with them. Salcedo had fourteen guns, but mostly light field-pieces.

The siege lasted three or four weeks, during which time there was almost continuous desultory fighting, and two

general assaults. Then an unaccountable thing occurred. An armistice for three days was agreed to.

It is almost certain that the full and true history of this enterprise, after the march from Spanish Bluffs, has never been written; and considering the lapse of nearly a century, and the large number of those who have delved into the subject, it is hardly to be expected that it ever will be. There was some internal dissension in the army of invasion that has not been explained. Several things may be imagined, but it is idle to guess. The accepted record shows that Magee visited the royalist Governor and commander of the troops opposed to him, and dined with him at his headquarters. During the three days of the armistice the two leaders were in friendly communication; and then it was announced that they had entered into an agreement.

Such an agreement as Magee reported to his army seems preposterous. It is mystifying. He had made a compact with Salcedo to withdraw the "Republican Army of the North," to deliver the fort of La Bahia back into his hands, and to march his army out without arms! For this it was stipulated that the invaders should be permitted to return home, unarmed, of course; that they would not be molested, and that the Governor would provide them with provisions on the way!

It is not beyond reason to suspect that Magee may have become mentally deranged. He had the courage to parade his troops, when he made known to them the terms of the

disgraceful agreement. The men were not without a suspicion of something unfavorable, but they were not prepared for this. The ranks stood as if petrified. When the Colonel had finished his announcement he asked all those who approved his act to shoulder arms. Then their anger burst forth in mutterings and imprecations. Every man of them resentfully stamped the butt of his gun on the ground, — not a rifle went to the shoulder. Majors and captains joined their curses of protest, — and Gutierrez was lounging idly at his headquarters.

Consternation followed confusion, and well it might. Magee, apparently confounded, went to his tent, leaving the troops on parade. Kemper blustered about, and then went for Gutierrez. He found him dining like a gourmand. The Mississippian found it hard to make him realize the serious danger of the situation. Late in the afternoon Salcedo sent a note under a white flag addressed to Magee, reminding him that it was the third and last day of the armistice; that he expected the American to redeem his word of honor and evacuate the fort.

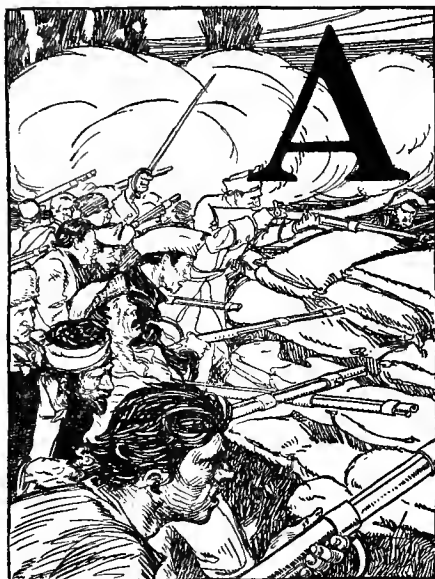
The note was taken to Gutierrez without notification to Magee. The General read it, grunted a few commonplaces, and sent it back by the flag without an answer. Salcedo was furious, naturally enough. Immediately he made a fierce attack from all sides, took the town, and advanced threateningly to the walls of the fort. Kemper, who had been advanced to the active command, is reported to

have put up a good fight. The Americans were at first thrown into much disorder by the warmth of the attack. He re-formed them, sallied out at their head, made a charge upon the Spaniards, and routed them handsomely. He chased them till darkness fell, and killed and wounded two hundred of them. The invaders' loss was very light, the number not being reported.

During this stirring engagement Augustus Magee remained in his tent, in what state of mental anguish can only be inferred from the deed that followed soon. At twelve o'clock that night he shot himself and died!

## CHAPTER X

*The Invaders Aggressive — Battle of Rosalis — Gachupins badly Defeated — Victorious Army becomes Demoralized — Viceroy's Forces Annihilate it.*



AND so the daring young West Pointer's star of destiny, which for a brief period appeared in a refulgent glow, suddenly set in darkness and mystery. One might have expected, in following the story of his hazard, that when he found himself repudiated and his action spurned, and

saw his troops fly at the enemy, he would have sprung to the front and sought death in the charge. Nothing in his life so discredited him as the circumstances of his leaving it. He seems to have died unlamented by all those whom he had rallied to the enterprise.

There was so much of mystery in his taking off that one of the earliest chroniclers of the campaign, instead of investigating the matter exhaustively, adopted an easy solution by attributing his death to quick consumption. And this silly explanation has been quoted without question by a number of subsequent compilers. Mr. Yoakum, whose history of Texas deserves precedence over all others for the period it covers, states that the young adventurer died by his own hand, and regretted he had not further testimony concerning the tragedy. It is not an important event in history, the passing of one rash glory chaser. But on his attempt hinged great things for Texas, and the swath he cut when he first entered her plains presaged success. With harmony in his camp — his eight hundred enthusiastic as one — it is not improbable that he would have shaped events in the far Southwest in a different course from that they subsequently took.

There is nothing in the accounts of Magee's life up to this venture that indicates his affliction with any dangerous malady. His undertaking was not that of a man on the verge of the grave with tuberculosis. It is preposterous to assume that it might have developed during the two or three months of the campaign, in that climate, and in the Autumn. It is most likely that his fatal pistol shot was the result of a broken heart. May he not have seen that the power he expected to wield through the success of the enterprise was likely to be wrested from him by his

subordinates and debased from his lofty purposes? May he not have seen, all too late, the wretched mistake he had made in resigning his commission in the army he had entered with such honorable hopes?

His agreement with Salcedo could not have been through fear, or because of the fancied helplessness of his position. It is probable that his army, in the proper morale, could have defeated and scattered the besiegers, just as it did defeat and disperse them when their ire was aroused, even before Magee's death. There was never an hour that the royalists could have stood before a general charge of the invaders. The theory of fear is out of consideration. And with the testimony now in, there seems to be no rational explanation of the strange occurrence except on the assumption of the unfortunate Magee's sudden dementia.

But although the originator of the expedition was dead, the army had a task before it that was to test its mettle. After the retreat of Salcedo it marched on San Antonio. Its numbers had been increased by several companies, directed by Captain Gaines at the Sabine, and now there were about twelve hundred men in the Army of the North. This included Mexican insurgents who, however, were not counted by the Americans as of much efficiency. Kemper had the chief command in the field, — Gutierrez was, in fact, a figurehead to dupe the natives.

The conquerors met the Spaniards at Rosalis, a place now unidentified a few miles from San Antonio. Salcedo

made a vain attempt here to ambush the oncoming enemy. That was his favorite mode of warfare. He concealed most of his army in a chaparral, but Kemper was too crafty to run headlong into the hornets' nest. He sent his contingent of natives to the front, but at the first fire from the hidden royalists they scampered back. Having located the enemy, Kemper now formed his lines under order of battle.

It is said the Americans carried out the instructions with such nerve and coolness that the Spaniards were dismayed, and fled from their position fairly before the charge was made. But they did not escape. The retreat to San Antonio developed into a slaughter. The native insurgents with the Americans, mainly Indians, now became valiant warriors. With the enemy on the run they fell upon him and indulged in rank butchery. Few prisoners were taken. Salcedo is reported to have lost nearly one thousand of his troops.

This historic battle of Rosalis can hardly be regarded as a battle at all. It was a chase, a rout, a killing. It has historic value, however, as being the first engagement to show the vast superiority as fighters of American troops over the Mexican Spaniards. The Americans now had deeper contempt than before for the "Gachupins," as the Texas Spaniards were termed. From this name, engagements of this campaign are known as the Gachupin battles.

After his disastrous retreat Salcedo reached San Antonio

with less than half his army. The Americans surrounded him and sent a demand for his surrender. He returned no reply. A second flag was sent, this time with what amounted to a peremptory order for him to come under safe conduct to the American headquarters to arrange terms. To this he responded by appearing in the conquerors' camp. He first offered his sword to Captain Taylor, who referred him with it to Major Kemper. But Kemper had enough respect for the nominal commander-in-chief not to take it himself, and rather curtly told him to present the blade to Gutierrez. But this was too much. The Governor refused to surrender in person to a Mexican insurrectionary outlaw. He contemptuously stuck his sword in the ground before Gutierrez's tent and left it there. The luxurious commander had it brought in to him — he was not squeamish about how things came.

The surrender was complete. The Americans occupied the town, and took possession of everything — a habit they formed when they first entered the province. They marched to the since famous Alamo, where they found seventeen American prisoners, whom they liberated. Besides the prisoners they got a lot of valuable stores and ammunition, and barrels of money. There was so much booty in the sack that each happy conqueror received, in the general distribution of the spoils, a gratuity of \$15, a suit of clothes, and an order for two horses or mules out of the public caballada. As for the Indians,

each dark-skinned rascal was given two dollars' worth of vermilion, and other presents to the fictitious value of \$130 — gewgaws were no doubt inventoried high — and sent away blessing the Americanos. Such bedecking and painting up as there was when they arrived at their various homes had never been seen before in Texas.

Having appropriated all the valuables, the invading host set the prisoners at liberty — it was too much trouble and expense to feed them. Some of the troops thus released, seeing how good it was to be conquerors, joined the buccaneers. Others went to their distant homes, begging their way as they could. Salcedo and his staff officers were paroled.

General Gutierrez now began to assume real authority. After some days he received a communication which he read to the other officers. This advised him that a couple of brigs were to sail for Matagorda Bay within a short time; and the General suggested that it would be safer to send Salcedo and staff to New Orleans, lest they take Spanish leave and rejoin the royalists in Mexico. Of course, there was not much likelihood of this happening; and Kemper, Taylor, and the other American leaders would not have cared much if it had. But they complacently acquiesced in Gutierrez's desire.

Under this order Governor Salcedo, ex-Governor Herrera, ex-Governor Cordero, and fifteen other officers were assembled and informed of the decision concerning them.

Gutierrez picked the guard to escort them to the Bay from among the native insurgents that were with him, and the whole were placed in command of a Captain Delgado. This was a villanous-looking fellow, who had distinguished himself with slaughtering laggards in the running fight from Rosalis. Some of the Americans suspected that something devilish was being planned, and it is not to their credit that they took no steps to ascertain what it was or to prevent it. Their suspicions were only too horribly verified.

Delgado started with his captive chieftains, but at a point only one and one-half miles away he halted. That was as far as he expected to go. Here he had his prisoners stripped of all their belongings. Then he ordered the guard to tie them securely. When this was done the wretches set to work and deliberately butchered the helpless men by cutting their throats!

Now the Americans composing the Army of the North were for the most part a pretty well hardened horde of invaders, but they would not sanction that. The leaders got together in an angry council, and the talk that General Gutierrez heard must have made him shiver. He was ordered under arrest. To this he objected that it hurt his feelings. The creature really seemed astonished that a few throat-cuttings like that should create such a swell of indignation. They locked him up, caught Delgado, put shackles on him, and threw him into prison. Both were tried by court-martial, but by that time the anger over

the dastardly act had somewhat cooled. And perhaps there was underground influence set at work. At any rate, Delgado made a strong plea of justification, asserting that Salcedo had treacherously murdered his father, who had been captured after the fall of Hidalgo ; and he was acquitted. Gutierrez could not urge any such extenuation. His justification was general—the crimes the victims had committed against liberty.

But Kemper and his fellows had heard a lot of that before, and it did not quite go with them. However, they were very lenient. They dismissed Gutierrez in disgrace on the counts of treachery and unwonted cruelty.

The situation now is interesting to the observer who figures on what is likely to happen next. Here is an army of conquest, victorious and saucy, that has marched triumphantly into the heart of the country it had set out to subjugate. It is greedy, and assumes the privilege of license as a foreordained prerogative. Besides, it has had demoralizing examples. With the exception of Magee, its leaders have not been military men. He was the only one who insisted upon proper military organization and discipline. Kemper and Taylor, and practically all of the others, had more the frontier or guerilla idea of warfare. A spirit of wild fraternity imbued them.

The first discord among the leaders had its unfavorable effects on the men, and with the death of the only disciplinarian of the staff all restraint vanished. For Gutierrez

no one had any real respect, and his deposition merely had the tendency to obliterate respect for any kind of authority. It is a striking fact that not a man, either among the captains or in the ranks, now exhibited the least comprehension of Magee's motive. Texas was, for the time being at least, subjugated. The army of defence was annihilated. Probably a majority of the inhabitants had submitted, or were ready to submit without a protest, to the conquerors. And yet no step was taken by the Americans to establish themselves. They organized no government. They did not seem to care about perpetuating their possession of the country. Probably not one among them was equal to so much statesmanship.

They had satisfied their ambition to beat the Spaniards, whom they disliked. What sufficed more, they had seized all the booty in sight, and, much like a lot of vikings, they were ready to rest on their laurels.

But affairs could not long remain *in status quo*. The troops entered upon unrestrained dissipation. They were under pay, and no one could tell where the money was to come from to meet the obligations. Seeing the bad state of things, Kemper and Ross deserted and returned home. Captain Perry succeeded to the principal command, if command it could be called. And while gambling and drinking and all sorts of license was going on, news came that another royalist army was on its way from the South.

Under this stimulus the marauders steadied up for a while, but fairly before order had been reëstablished, the enemy came upon them. To make the situation more precarious the natives showed an unfriendly disposition. They had been subject to spoliation and outrage, and now that a prospect appeared for ridding themselves of the foreigners they were ready to assist. They had seen and felt quite enough of the blessings of freedom as bestowed by the Republican Army of the North. In the face of this, and with the hope of placating the republican sympathizers, or those who had been such, Gutierrez was recalled and reinstated in the general command.

Thereupon the Mexicans and Gachupin allies of the invaders, about seven hundred strong, organized themselves into a separate corps, of which a bold, untamed varlet named Manchaco was made colonel, the real command, however, being in Major Gaines. The latter had now joined the army; in fact, recruits kept arriving constantly, the news of the victories over the royalists having reached the Southern States.

The second royalist army was under command of General Elisondo. He came with about fifteen hundred regulars, besides a considerable auxiliary of volunteers. His approach was signalized by the capture of the outpost and grand caballada of the conquerors, by which he secured a large part of their horses. But that was the extent of his victory. He had the fatal habit of delay. Camping

a half mile from the town, instead of attacking in the flush of his first success he constructed two bastions "crowning the summit of a ridge of gentle ascent near the river Alizan," behind which his army rested.

The republican allies marched out before this place late one night, rested on their arms till break of day, and then, while the enemy was at matins, following the Spanish custom, they set upon him like a whirlwind. The second army of royalists may have been of better courage than the first, but it met almost as severe a defeat. The invaders were of a more vigorous race. They were still masters of what they had taken, and might even yet have made themselves permanently so, if their wisdom had been equal to their valor. Elisondo lost in killed about four hundred, his total loss being near one thousand. The Americans and allies had less than one hundred killed.

Mexico was now thoroughly alarmed, and the Spanish authorities excited to more active efforts to stop the conquest. The viceroy, Venegas, acted with energy. A third army was organized and sent to Texas. It was commanded by General Arredondo, a soldier who had shown marked ability in suppressing insurrection. He was provided with some two thousand of the ablest regular troops in the viceroyalty, besides which he had nearly an equal number of volunteers, his total strength being almost four thousand men.

At about this time another striking figure appeared

among the conquerors. It was General José Alvarez Toledo, a native of Cuba, of a distinguished family, but an exile because of his revolutionary "feeling." For some time he had been in New Orleans raising recruits and securing supplies for the "army of liberation." He arrived at San Antonio late in July, 1813. Gutierrez having again been dismissed, the leaders fearing his treachery, Toledo was elected to the chief command. He was a man of higher character and more ability than his predecessor.

Hardly had Toledo become generalissimo when the royalist legion under Arredondo approached. Toledo advanced to meet him with about eight hundred and fifty Americans under Perry and Taylor, and about fifteen hundred Mexicans, or Gachupins, under command of Manchaco. It is reported that the latter was jealous of the Cuban, and resented his being given the supreme command. There was blood on the banners of the allies when they formed for battle that day, and good fortune deserted the American conquerors. Enervated by continued excesses, and grown rash with easy victories, they went into the engagement reckless of the authority of the commander.

Manchaco started the disaster. He occupied the left position and, against Toledo's orders, it is declared, advanced into an ambuscade which had been laid for him. His corps of Texans was soon disorganized. Toledo tried to effect a temporary retreat, but the Americans had now

got into the fray and were intractable. There was a furious struggle for some hours, but the Mexicans did not stampede this time. Their phalanxes were too solid. Their artillery mowed down the oncoming allies, and when the day was done Toledo had lost his first battle, and there was no longer an American invading army. This battle of the Medina occurred August 18, 1813.

To complete the disaster Manchaco and his followers went over to the enemy. He gave Arredondo full information as to the state of affairs in the province, and acted with him in pursuing and punishing the insurgents. The Americans, those who survived the battle of the Medina, struck for home from the fatal field. At Spanish Bluffs, one of the scenes of their victories, seventy or eighty of them were captured. Their fate was in keeping with the mediæval style of warfare which their irruption in the province had made common. They were marched to an island in the Trinity. Here a long and deep grave, or trench, was dug. Across this pieces of timber were laid. The prisoners were tied and set upon these cross-pieces, by tens. As they were shot they tumbled into the common grave.

Only ninety-three of the American invaders succeeded in regaining Natchitoches, among whom were Captains Perry, Bullard, and Taylor, the latter badly wounded. Even while they were escaping from Texas they met volunteers on the road to join in the supposedly complete conquest. And Texas *had been conquered*. Magee's plans had worked

out well to that extent. If he had been a Bernadotte or a Jackson, with the strength of command of either of them, he would doubtless have dominated the short-sighted marauders around him and made his conquest secure.

It is characteristic of our national self-esteem that more than one historian of these events has attributed the defeat of the Americans to the treachery of Manchaco, ignoring the ruthless, predatory character of the expedition, and the entire lack of administrative or constructive ability of anybody connected with it, at least after Magee's death.

It is one of the whimsicalities in our histories — excepting a few of the most critical ones — that the leaders who survived this predatory expedition have been honored as heroes in the cause of liberty, rather than censured as plain buccaneers, which they really were. Foote, as previously cited, lauded Kemper as a liberator, — but then, he considered Aaron Burr a liberator also. It is probable that during the remainder of their lives they posed as veterans who had battled in a sacred cause. In fact, it stands in the records that Ross, one of those who quit when there was no more booty in sight, who lived in Mississippi long afterward, went in 1830 (after their republic was established), on a journey to Mexico where he solicited a pension for his alleged military services in their revolutionary cause. Whether he received it or not, it indicates the audacity of his pretensions.

The tale of this most successful, as it was also the largest and most disastrous, buccaneering expedition of Americans against the Spanish possessions would not be all told if omission were made of its awful consequences. The Spaniards were highly incensed against the inhabitants of Texas for their complicity in the attempted revolution, as well as for their republican sympathies. Arredondo marched into San Antonio from the victorious field, and immediately seized some seven hundred peaceable citizens who had, according to information given by the renegade Manchaco, their former neighbor, welcomed the "liberators." He confined three hundred of them in one house, which was tightly closed, one hot August night, and eighteen of them died by suffocation. "From day to day the others were shot without any form of trial." During this time his troops were scouring the province, capturing and killing Republicans wherever found. A large company of women and children, widows and orphans of these victims, were driven into San Antonio long distances on foot.

But this did not appease the vindictive Arredondo. He had a prison-barrack built at San Antonio for women — mostly widows of his vengeance. In this he penned up five hundred females, all classes and conditions, young and old, the refined and the vile, and worked them together. He jocosely called it "the Quinta." Their sentence was to convert twenty-four bushels of corn into tortillas each day

for his army. The property of all his victims was confiscated. San Antonio was indeed mightily stricken. The Americans had despoiled and corrupted her, but now was the climax of her misery !

Many of the hard characters who escaped from the disasters of the Medina stole away and took up their abode in the "neutral ground," a retreat for desperadoes which the nations had not yet been unkind enough to abolish ; and thus a nucleus was preserved for further hostile organizations.

## CHAPTER XI

*Colonel Perry's Exploit — Joins with Aury and Mina — The Triumvirate Descends on Mexico — Splits on the Rock of Jealousy — Mina Captured — Perry Returns to Texas — Dies in Battle.*



COLONEL PERRY had not yet had enough of conquest. It is somewhat of a marvel how the adventurers of his stamp managed in that day to secure backing for their enterprises, — upon what means they lived while putting their plans into operation. Perry must have come out

of Texas, on the run from the Medina, without anything but his bedraggled uniform. Yet he at once engaged in another enterprise against the Spanish possessions. Of this one he was the impresario. The measure of success that had been attained by the Magee expedition

encouraged the belief that another attempt would reap permanent benefits. To be sure, no leader who had been in that army had any chance of ever winning; if he could not seize the opportunity that went begging at San Antonio, after conquest had been effected, there was nothing in him to count on afterwards. But he could not take that measure of himself.

As in the case of Magee, he sought to attract the disaffected of Texas and Mexico by employing as ostensible leaders exiled revolutionary "patriots." Of these he formed a cluster, the centre brilliant of which was José Alvarez Toledo. Of his American adherents, the principal one was John Robinson, an adventurer who had for some time plied about New Orleans. Robinson seems to have done a good deal of coining trouble on his own account without succeeding in putting much of it into circulation.

The Perry expedition began to take form soon after the battle of New Orleans, in which, by the way, Kemper had arrived home from Texas in time to serve "with distinction." But the United States authorities, having received urgent complaints from Spain on account of the American raids into her territory, got the scent of this one in time to nip it in the bud. Probably they would never have heard of it if Perry had not advertised it prominently in the papers. All those instigated in it, save Perry, were indicted in the United States District Court for violation

of the neutrality laws. Why the chief promoter was not included is not explained.

It is worthy of remarking, in this connection, that, so far as any records of the events indicate, not one of those who were implicated in the Magee expedition — and who lived to return — was ever called to account in any way for it by the Federal or any State government.

It is reported that Perry, although not apprehended, was vigilantly watched. Perhaps that is why he went over into that paradise of the lawless, the “neutral ground.” But for some reason he did not rally the old clan around him. He crossed the Sabine into Texas, and having concluded to try his fortunes now by water, went down to the Gulf and gathered a tiny armada. This he manned with a crew of desperadoes, spiced for deviltry on either land or sea.

Fate was against this precious lot, for they had hardly set sail for Mexico when they encountered a storm which blew them back and disabled their frail craft. Perry was undaunted. By communication with friends in Texas he learned that Arredondo had returned home, and that, Texas having been so fearfully reduced by his punishments, only two or three hundred troops were now on guard in the province.

At this time Luis de Aury, “commander of the combined fleets of the republics of Mexico, New Grenada, Venezuela, and La Plata,” consisting of a dozen or fifteen

crazy vessels, had occupied Galveston. It is needless to explain that the republics named were in the revolutionary stage, and prospective. Aury had a great command — on paper, — but his war vessels were insignificant tubs, most of which, for safety, needed to keep within shore view. They were manned by vagrant refugees, mostly mulattoes, the crews leavened with a few pirates from Barataria, the chief business centre of Lafitte and his merry outlaws.

Aury was from New Grenada. It must be believed that he was a man of some ability and, while careless as to the instruments he worked with, was sincere in his endeavors to overthrow Spanish rule in America. At Galveston this man set up a government, and his followers elected him civil and military Governor of Texas. No sooner had he taken his oath of fidelity to the new republic of Mexico (which was somewhere in the saddle among the Mexican mountains) and devotion to liberty, than he started his fleet out privateering on Spanish commerce. Probably a bolder and more desperate lot of "privateers" never scouted the gulf, for with their weak armament they practically cleared it of Spanish merchantmen.

To Aury, man of many titles and much theoretic authority, came Perry, and, of course, was cordially welcomed. Then another and still more famous man than either of the two joined them. He was Xavier Mina, an exiled Spanish officer, who fled before the conquering French and reached Baltimore with fifteen brother officers.



XAVIER MINA

*Spanish-American revolutionary adventurer*



Those were great days for exiled chivalry and homeless patriotism. Mina also brought some money. Toledo no sooner heard of this than he hied him to Baltimore, and made up to Mina with plans and specifications. Being a brother aristocrat, he obtained a respectful hearing, with the result that together they began immediately to fit out a squadron with the object of conquering Florida and setting up a separate and "free" government.

September 16, 1816, they were ready, and sailed with two hundred troops on board, and plenty of arms and munitions. But this expedition met with the same evil luck that Perry's did out of the Sabine bayous. The two hopeful leaders were shipwrecked, quarrelled, and soon afterward Toledo, probably receiving a tempting offer, went over to the new King of Spain. Their undertaking would have come to naught, for Florida was soon afterward invaded by General Jackson, and a year or two later was ceded to the United States. So this scheme being frustrated, Mina got his ships and tackle to rights and sailed away to Galveston to join the foes of oppression there.

In the meanwhile Aury had been conducting business not very creditable to one of his pretensions. His "privateers" had not confined their depredations on the Gulf to Spanish craft, but had scuttled several vessels engaged in legitimate trade under the American flag. The Spanish slavers they captured were the best revenue producers.

Instead of liberating the slaves, as a man professing such holy devotion to liberty might have been expected to do, Aury effected an arrangement with the Baratarians, through which he was enabled to get them into the United States markets. The general scheme, however, was not original with Aury. It had been worked before him. James Bowie was a prominent slave-dealer. He "stood well" with the planters. He also was in good standing with Lafitte, the King of the Baratarians, pirates who took their name from the island they infested. Lafitte did a "regular" business — taking any slow ship. But the negroes could not be disposed of in Mexico, so the pirates would run them into the United States by water through Bayou La Fourche, and thence by land from Point Boliver and Alexandria. Here Bowie, and other speculative purchasers, would drive them by night. The trick now was to take them to a custom-house officer and have them denounced as imported contraband. The Africans immediately would be sold under the law and repurchased by the speculator, who as "reformer" received half the purchase money. Then the human chattels could be resold, legally, to the planters. It must be remembered that the importation of slaves into the United States had for several years been prohibited by law.

Aury was judge of his own court of admiralty, and assessed the value of negroes handled by his men. The

price at Galveston was \$1.00 per pound, or \$140 per head, prime.

So Perry, Aury, and Mina came together for the general purpose of warring on Spain. But their plans were not the same. Perry meant conquest — other details to be arranged later. Mina now determined to aid the new republic in Mexico. Aury seemed to centre his ambition on Texas, and to feel that he was establishing an ideal republic on the Texan coast. He had now three or four hundred men. Perry was stationed on the mainland with about one hundred. Mina brought about two hundred. Although they had leagued themselves in the same cause, all three claimed equal authority and independent command.

After much discussion and negotiation they decided upon an expedition by water to Mexico, on which they embarked with their allied forces April 6, 1817. They landed at the mouth of the Satander River and captured the small town of Soto la Marina. The place really had no defence. But already there was discord in the triumvirate. Each was jealous of the other. Aury halted, and returned to Galveston. His defection greatly weakened the invading force, as he had the largest individual following.

Not long after he was gone rumor reached Perry and Mina that a strong force of royalists was on the way to dispute with them. This did not enthuse Perry at all.

His last dispute with a Spanish royalist army had been distinctly not to his fancy. So he managed to quarrel with Mina, and in a huff, assumed for an excuse, he departed, taking with him only fifty followers. Mina, thus left to his own devices and undivided authority, exhibited courage rather than judgment. He expected the country would rise at his approach, and that he would be enabled to meet the viceroy's troops with an overpowering army of republicans. Only a few joined him, but even with this handful of volunteers he defeated the first battalion he met, captured one or two more towns, and advanced a considerable distance inland. But he never had a possibility of achieving his purpose. At Remedios he was taken prisoner by the royalists, and by order of the viceroy he was shot.

Perry set out with his little band of fifty to return to Texas overland through the enemy's country. It was a twelve-hundred-mile journey, and they had to subsist on the country, a great stretch of which was desert and mountain. But they eluded the royalists, gave their army posts no trouble, and finally arrived at the scenes of the Gachupin battles.

This Perry was a hardened case. He was an adventurer without high purposes, and not distinguished for intelligence. What he expected to accomplish in Texas with a corporal's guard, can hardly be divined. But he began operations by besieging La Bahia, the place where

Magee's army had such a varied experience. Here he got into a tight place. The royalists had heard of him, and sent a detachment of cavalry to look him up. This came up with him during the siege. The defenders of the town, seeing the army of relief attacking the enemy in the rear, sallied out, and the besiegers now found themselves surrounded. Including the garrison, they were forced to contend with about five times their own number.

Whatever their motives or character, they fought like Spartans. Not a man showed the white feather, and not a man of them survived. Perry stood till the last. Seeing his last comrades fall, he killed himself by firing a pistol ball into his brain, as his old commander, Magee, had done at nearly the identical spot, but under such different circumstances, five years before.

## CHAPTER XII

*A Cultured Adventurer — Courtship of Doctor Long and Pretty Jennie Wilkinson — Long also Infatuated with Conquest — Invades Texas — Seeks an Ally in Lafitte.*



**I**F there is any chapter of real romance in the chronicles of adventure in the Southwest, it is that which recites the story of the youthful and dashing Doctor Long and his more youthful and beautiful wife.

After the terrible disasters to all those who had embarked on schemes of conquest, the initial goal of which was Texas, it required self-confidence and daring of an unusual order — either that or stupid desperation — to take up the perilous game again. And Doctor Long was no stupid. Neither had he in the least degree the qualities of a blundering desperado.

He was a youth who had enjoyed the advantages of civilization, — so, for that matter, had Magee, — and his start in life was such that it is difficult to realize fully how he could have become so infatuated with a project so stupendous and risky as the conquest of a great province.

However, we view his situation from a great distance; greater than is measured by the flight of years since then. Safe to say, the obstacles are plainer — and look enough bigger — viewed from our side of them than they did from his side. Yet it may be said that no class of men ever drew such desperate drafts on the depositories of the future as that which speculated on this visionary dominion.

It seems to have been almost impossible for anybody to write real romance into (or out of) the annals of Texas. It might have been otherwise, if Manuel de Godoy, Prime Minister and all but king of Spain, had been permitted to carry out his designs. According to a well-authenticated story Texas, or New Spain, was given by grant of the King to Godoy, who, having heard much about its vast extent and natural richness, resolved upon a grand scheme of colonization with a view to creating a magnificent empire. Not only was the province given to him, but ships and soldiers for his enterprise; and he assembled a large number of young women from the “asylums” of Spain to send along. But just then there was an uprising of the people. Godoy ceased to be prime minister, but instead went into exile soon afterward; the young women were

returned to their former abodes, and the grandees came not to New Spain.

James Long's career was exceptional. He was a young man of culture, of attractive appearance, of more intelligence than the average of adventurers. Yet he was entranced by something about as tangible as a mirage. He read Scott, and was dazzled by the glories of Napoleon. He grew restless and ambitious. The magnet of renown drew on his susceptibilities, and what appears a Quixotic venture now, was then regarded, not only by him but by many of his most intelligent acquaintances, as an entirely feasible undertaking.

Long was a native of Virginia. At a very early age he removed with his parents to Tennessee. There he studied medicine, and became an acquaintance and favorite of General Jackson. (It seems odd that every man from Tennessee who became known in those days — adventurers particularly — was an intimate friend of Jackson.) Having entered the practice of his profession before the second war with England, he enlisted as a surgeon and was on duty at the battle of New Orleans. It is asserted that he distinguished himself, and that the General called him his young lion. Somebody probably thought of that afterward.

After the termination of the war he was stationed at Natchez, still in the service. One day he went to attend a friend, a young officer named Calvert who was lying

ill at a private house, suffering from injuries received in the famous battle. Now began the romance of his life. The story of it was written out by President Mirabeau B. Lamar, of the Lone Star State, and incorporated by Foote in his "Texas and the Texans." President Lamar may have been emulating the example of Governor Claiborne's story of Madeline; at least, the style of fiction-writing of the two Executives is quite similar. They never argue, and do very little explaining. They state the case in a sort of executive-decree way, and we may take it at that or close the book.

From this account it is learned that at the house in which the young officer Calvert was convalescing, there was a school-girl of fourteen who was an orphan, born in Maryland, and the niece of General James Wilkinson. She was living with her married sister. Another older sister was affianced to Lieutenant Calvert. Now, this Jennie Wilkinson was a paragon. She was as beautiful as fourteen Southern Summers could make her, she was precocious, and had the animation of a gazelle.

One morning as she was about to start schoolward a forward minx of a mulatto slave girl, employed in the capacity of a maid, volunteered the information that the "handsomest gemman she'd ever sot her two eyes on" was in the sick man's room, and suggested that "Missy 'd better take a peek."

"What you suppose I care, you saucy thing!" replied

Missy Jennie with well-merited rebuke. But the wench maintained she had been warranted by the provocation — that the doctor who had come to tend the sick man was “sholy the most handsomest man in the whole world.”

So Miss Jennie, instead of living up to her pretensions of haughty indifference to manly beauty, slipped around slyly and not only “peeked” but took a long and admiring look. It is not intended to be understood that the statesman tells the tale in quite this flippant manner — some of the dignity of his diction has been sacrificed to intimacy. But the story is the same.

Well, after taking her “peek,” Miss Jennie took off her sun-bonnet, and went to making herself more womanlike than she had ever done before; and planted herself in the main living-room, east side of the hall, so that the unsuspecting knight of the lancet and calomel could n’t get out without encountering trouble, — or at least without seeing her. A girl twice her years could not have taken a worse advantage of him. And there she waited, pretending that she was interested in nothing in the world but the morning-glories blowing in at the window.

By and by out came the young doctor. He did not fall over, but he acted pretty well as if he had come in contact with one of Signor Galvani’s recently invented batteries, which he had just been explaining about. But in spite of his unusual equipment for heart-breaking he walked on out, and never said a word.

Anybody sane and observing would have thought the sick lieutenant had suffered a dangerous relapse, by the increased and anxious attention his doctor began to give him from that morning. His *fiancée* noticed it and became alarmed, and the lieutenant himself began to inquire a lot about his symptoms. What was more alarming, the doctor fidgeted when he came morning and afternoon and evening, and did not seem to know just what to prescribe next.

But in a day or two they espied him playing checkers with Jennie, and those two engaged ones understood the situation. It was explained, and none too soon. For the lieutenant, although he had been well on the road to recovery, would surely have been frightened into a setback with a day or two more of it.

Now there arose such a tempest as only can be imagined. Whether her aunt and uncle punished Jennie it is not certain, but they and all her other relatives and protectors entered all other forms of objections. They scolded, they coaxed, they declared that not only was she too young by years to marry, but that she should never marry a man who would take such advantage of childish innocence! Then in the same breath they said it was her wilfulness. And besides, the doctor himself was only twenty. Even his friend the lieutenant, perhaps from having to keep loyal to the family, gently remonstrated with the boy.

"Put it off for a while, Jimmie," he would say;

“why, she ’ll just grow more beautiful the longer you wait.”

But Jimmie just looked satisfied and would not talk back. Nevertheless, the uncle and aunt kept Jennie very close now, and although she declared she would never wed any other, and cried over it, they said she should not marry. Perhaps they would have had their way had not they been outgeneraled. Not by an elopement, either, but a more romantic way than that.

It would almost appear as if it was just to meet such emergencies as this, but anyway there was a law in Mississippi in those days which provided, and made mandatory, that an orphan, upon arriving at the age of fourteen, being supposed then to have some sense, should choose a guardian. At least our president-author says there was such a law, and it is presumptive that he knew, he having formerly resided in that State. One might be pardoned the suspicion that he had been Jennie’s lawyer, and that he put up the ruse himself. But anyhow, the time now having arrived to make her choice, she chose the doctor for her guardian and married him into the bargain, for against the guardian’s permit no one could say nay. The marriage occurred May 4, 1815. The exact date gives verisimilitude to the story.

Not long after their marriage the youthful couple went to live at Port Gibson. The doctor resigned his commission and took up practice again. But he was a restless

sort of spirit, and would never remain long at any one place. Coming into a little money from some source, he decided to turn planter. Going up the river a little farther, he bought a plantation which included the site of the subsequent city of Vicksburg. Here he really laid the foundation for a fortune, but it was not in the man to wait. Very soon land speculators began to tempt him, and he sold out to Mr. Vick, after whom the city was named — and a pretty hard speculator he was, too.

Being now out of planting, with his money in hand, Long went back to Natchez and engaged in still another occupation — merchandising. In this he remained two years, and it was during this time that the Southwest was raised to a high pitch of excitement and indignation over the treaty which had been entered into by John Quincy Adams and the Spanish Minister de Onis, fixing the Southwest boundary at the Sabine River (finally doing away with the “neutral ground” nuisance); and no less aroused by the proposed bill in Congress, limiting slavery to 36° 30' North latitude.

Up to this time enterprises against Spanish territory had been prompted by the spirit of adventure, which was mainly produced by the unusual political conditions of the times. But after the widespread dissatisfaction with the government of the new republic had been allayed, other things transpired to direct the attention of the restless toward the Mexican provinces, not the least of which was

the publication, in 1807, of Captain Zebulon Pike's account of his explorations.

When the United States came into possession of Louisiana, nobody had any definite knowledge of the territory purchased. It seemed almost boundless. It was so vast, indeed, that our government had not wanted to buy it all, simply fearing the responsibility. Our plenipotentiaries were instructed to negotiate for Orleans Territory only, but after dickering for a while Napoleon gave the order one day to "sell them all or nothing." As President Jefferson felt that the order was final, he took the whole at the same price.

Wanting to find out something about this new domain, the government sent out an expedition under command of Captain Pike, of the regular army, to explore it. Among other exciting things that happened to him, the captain ran foul of the Spaniards. They suspected the motives of the party, as they had warrant, based on previous experiences, to suspect any such expedition from this country. They forbade him crossing the Sabine, and when he pushed ahead regardless, Governor Cordero sent a regiment of 600 regulars to gather him in. However, Pike evaded arrest by losing himself somewhere in the unknown wilds. But while he eluded the Mexicans this time they subsequently captured him in New Mexico, and took him before the authorities at Santa Fé. They forwarded him, bag and baggage, to Chihuahua, where he was kept in



LIEUTENANT ZEBULON PIKE

*Government explorer of the Great Southwest*



duress for some time, and his papers expropriated. Upon his release and return, his report of the vast and diversified region he had traversed fired many of the adventurous spirits of our Southwest to reach out for some of it; and, of course, they preferred that belonging to Spain.

But with the Adams-De Onis treaty, the incentive everywhere was changed. Records of the time show that the whole Western country complained because of the boundary settlement. Everybody thought the boundary should have been fixed farther West—that we should have secured the most or all of Texas, which they pretended to believe was thrown in with the Louisiana purchase.

As to the slavery proposition, this was about the first outcry of the slave proprietors against having limits set or proposed against their “institution”; and although the bill mentioned did not pass in Congress, it was an admonition of what was coming later. The slavers already had been looking to Texas, and as soon as the terms of the treaty became known many of them began to talk defiance of the government and the “right” to seize Texas. This province was looked upon as much more valuable than Florida, and many felt—not without a little reason in the facts—that in the closures Texas had been sacrificed for the peninsular State. The extremists (and America did not lack noisy ones then more than at any other time) declared the government had

deliberately violated her fundamental policy of never relinquishing territory once possessed. The constitution experts were in evidence then, as usual when any disputed question of government policy arises, and declared that the "cession" of Texas to Spain was beyond the treaty-making power.

Of course, the United States did not cede Texas, never having had possession of the Territory. In Congress it was urged that our government had pledged its honor to France to incorporate all of the Louisiana purchase into the Union—not making out a case, however, showing that Texas, or even any portion of it, was included therein. It was a quibble in which great numbers of the people joined in opposition to the government, to the credit neither of their good sense nor of their moral perception. But it was inspired largely by the already increasing demand for slave lands, a demand which never could have been satisfied.

This was the state of public feeling in the South when Doctor Long returned to Natchez. It appeared to him that now was the time for a brilliant *coup*. His suggestions for the organization of a company as the nucleus of an army to take the coveted land met with hearty endorsement by the planters and traders of his vicinity. Getting the Texas virus in his system, he began to work up public meetings to promote his projects. It was a popular scheme.

When Philip Nolan organized his party at the same town nearly twenty years before, there was a semblance of secrecy about it. At least, many of those who sanctioned his enterprise did not care to be known publicly as doing so. Now, everything was bold and above board ; and one wonders why the government did not receive advices about it through its marshals and judges, if through no other channel, and forbid the proceeding. Neither Nolan's nor Long's enterprise was the lawless adventure of one man, as some commentators, whose habit it is to assume that everything sanctioned by the American people is righteous, have hinted. That is largely true of Magee's plunge, but in the other cases "enlightened" public sentiment was mainly responsible.

At one of the public meetings at Natchez a call was issued for volunteers to go to Texas. A subscription was opened for a conquest fund. Doctor Long had been one of the chief speakers at the meeting, and he now became one of the first and largest subscribers. The fact shows how entirely he cast his life, his fortune, his future, and his honor on the chances, that he closed out his business and devoted practically all his means to the undertaking. When the company was organized he was given the chief command of it, with the title of general. That he was lacking in most of the qualities that fit a man for such a command can hardly be doubted. He was only twenty-four. He was not an experienced soldier, his short

period of army service having been as a surgeon. And he lacked those stern, domineering characteristics that give men authority over others.

In June, 1820, Long set out from Natchez with seventy-five men. He left his wife in a precarious condition, and two young children. Another child was born to them a week or two after his departure. But it cannot be deemed an evidence of indifference that he left his wife at such a time. She was every whit as full of the enterprise as he was, and it was agreed that she should follow and join him as soon as she was able. They really had visions of making their future home in Texas, and of shaping the destinies of the country.

It is impossible to state whether Mrs. Long or her husband imbibed any of their ideas of conquest from her uncle, the disloyal general ; but it is remarkable that every one of these expeditions traces back in some way to that arch-plotter, Wilkinson.

As Long marched through Louisiana he received additions to his company, so that at Natchitoches he had three hundred enthusiastic men around him. Among them was Colonel Samuel Davenport, rancher and contractor, who had been of the Magee expedition ; Colonel James Bowie, a prominent gentleman, fighting man, and illicit slave-trader of New Orleans, inventor of the murderous stabbing-knife which bears his name ; and there, too, was old Gutierrez, as patriotic as ever, and ready

to join any raid that promised spoils and good living. There were, no doubt, some reputable men with the doctor, measured by the standards of the country, but he had also the usual contingent of discontents whose highest ideal of liberty was absence of laws.

Long took possession of Nacogdoches, in Texas, apparently without opposition. On June 23 he issued a proclamation, styling himself President of the Supreme Council of Texas. In this utterance he declared that "the citizens of Texas have long indulged the hope that, in adjusting the boundaries of the Spanish possessions in America and of the Territories of the United States, they should be included within the limits of the latter." This was followed by a proclamation declaring the independence of Texas, and that it was a free republic.

A government was organized. It declared itself possessed of powers to enact laws relating to public lands, revenues, etc., as necessities required. The Supreme Council also provided, under powers conferred upon it by itself, for the sale of the best lands at not less than one dollar per acre, one-half to be paid in cash on receipt of certificate, the balance to be met in easy annual instalments. They also did something of more historical interest,—they established the first printing shop and newspaper in the province. Horatio Bigelow was the editor.

The principal officials in this sod-house government besides Long, were Davenport and Bowie. Also prominent in the Council was David Long, brother of the president, who seems to have been most active in establishing barter with the Indians. He made a trading trip as far westward as the Trinity River, which shows that the whole eastern frontier was defenceless. .

Having effected an organization, Long proceeded to take more effectual control of the country. He despatched a Major Smith with forty men to establish themselves at Cooshattie village on the Trinity. He also sent Captain Johnson with about an equal force to make a settlement at Brazos Falls. Next Major Cooke was detailed to Pecan Point, with thirty or forty followers, and Captain Walker was ordered with twenty-three men to plant American civilization on a slavery foundation at Washington.

After splitting up his command and distributing the parcels of it around at points widely distant from each other, so that the enemy, whether royalists or savages, could attack and eat them up in detail, the contriver of this ingenious piece of strategy went on a journey to Galveston. The "general" had previously sent Colonel Gaines thither with plenipotentiary powers to solicit an alliance with Lafitte, the present lord of the island and prince of the gulf pirates. That courtly ruffian, to whose name has clung a mysterious and lasting notoriety, had

changed his residence and jurisdiction from Baratavia to Galveston two or three years before. The object of Gaines's visit was to secure the coöperation of Lafitte and his hardened band with the Supreme Council. It was a desperate move.

## CHAPTER XIII

*The Invader and the Corsair — Disasters Afield — The Garrison at Bolivar  
— Jennie Long's Distress and Loyalty — A Heroine in the Wild.*



MBASSADOR GAINES did not succeed in his mission to the corsair prince, and so the president-general determined to negotiate in person with the distinguished outlaw. Recalling Major Cooke from Pecan, he invested him with the general command during his own absence,

and with his accustomed self-confidence set out to induce Lafitte to come and enjoy with him the blessings of conquest.

He found the pirate leader a smooth-spoken son of villany, in form and style the typical pirate king. The

story of his deeds is too common to require repetition, but it may be stated that this was the era of his supposed reform. Having defied those who set a price upon his head, and retaliated by himself offering a reward for the head of the Governor of Louisiana, the desperado had finally made terms with authority and engaged his services against the English in the second war.

Later he took up privateering again, with the understanding that he would not disturb American commerce. Building him a house on Galveston Island, and surrounding himself with comforts, he had been recognized by the professed republican "patriots" of Texas, now comprising very few besides outlaws and exiles, and they gave him the title of "Governor of Galveston."

The reason Lafitte gave Gaines for declining Long's proposal was his disbelief in the success of the enterprise. He cited the failures of Nolan, Magee, and Perry, and could not see how the present expedition could hope to do any better. But the real reason, no doubt, was that he scented rivalry in Long, and looked forward to gathering around him a force strong enough to control the province alone. And besides, he was just getting into fresh trouble. As a reformed villain he was not calculated to shine, and furthermore there was too little money in it.

He had not kept his crimson hands off from American merchantmen, or at least his industrious subjects had not, and the king got the discredit. An uncommonly fierce

cutthroat denominated in the guild as "the Ferocious," who had won most evil renown, applied to Lafitte to enter his service as privateer against the Spaniards. But the monarch of pirates and governor of patriots having had a hint that the United States Navy had an eye on him, and fearing his applicant lacked judgment in such delicate business, was inclined to deny him.

"If I scuttle anything but Spanish, you may hang me," said the Ferocious, by way of entreaty.

"All right," assented Lafitte; "I'll just hang you if you do."

The Ferocious, — what particular kind of deviltry he had committed to merit this appellation of excellence is not entered in the minutes, but, safe to say, he was a man-eater, — the Ferocious took this verbal compact as a pleasantry between friends, a sort of gentlemen's agreement that did not portend much. In that carelessness of discernment, he started off over the seas and scuttled the very first vessel he sighted, the same being an American schooner, near Sabine Pass. There may have been some ocular confusion in this case, all flags having for so long looked alike to this terror of the deep. But to his misfortune, just at that time the United States revenue patrol *Lynx*, commanded by Captain Maury, — one of the old Virginia Maurys, — came on the scene. Maury learned of the last depredation of the Ferocious, scouted him out, gave chase, and captured his craft in the bayou; but the

scuttlers got away to shore, and returned by land to Galveston.

Now this was the second bad mistake the pirate made, and a fatal one, for Lafitte learned about the whole transaction; and, fearing a business call from Maury, he hanged the *Ferocious*, according to previous mutual understanding, and left him dangling conspicuously, anything but an ornament, for the navy captain to inspect. It seems that Lafitte was a man of his word — sometimes. Of course, Maury was grateful to him for such proof of his law-loving disposition, but he also demanded the associates of the deceased. Lafitte gave them up, not liking the pointed way the *Lynx's* guns had of overlooking his capital. But he objected to Maury's meddlesomeness, declared himself to be an official of the Republic of Texas, that Galveston was a port of entry of that republic, and other things similar.

Maury went his way, deciding to let the star of forgiveness shine on the alleged republic if it would heed the light. But Lafitte, as a reformer and honorable functionary, appeared to lack moral influence over his fellows, for very soon they scuttled other American coastwise cruisers. And then the government despatched after them the brig *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Kearney in command. Kearney called politely at Galveston, was affably received by Lafitte, dined with him, sipped his brandy, and smoked; and then ordered the pretentious prince of cutthroats to

take his government and all his crew and belongings and pack off instanter, or he would blow the whole nest of them into bits.

The robber chieftain pleaded for a few days' time, which was granted; and it was at this juncture that Long came with his prospectus. Whether or not the presence of Lieutenant Kearney had anything to do with his continued refusal of the doctor's request is uncertain; but anyhow, he packed off to the isthmus, and that was the last of Lafitte in Texas or thereabouts.

In the weary meanwhile Mrs. Long, still beautiful, and grown as ambitious as her husband, was entering upon a sea of troubles that stirs one's warmest sympathies. After the birth of her baby, shortly after her husband's departure from Natchez, she was eager for the journey to join him, and could wait only two weeks before setting out. Of course, it was a hazardous attempt. Under present-day conditions of travel she might have met with no serious results from her rash haste; but then it was almost constant exposure.

She started under the protection of two or three citizens, her neighbors, who were going to join their fortunes with her husband's enterprise. She took along a single nurse, a negress. For the first half of the way, she had all three of her children with her. They took boat and went down the Mississippi to its confluence with the Red River. Then they ascended the Red as far as Alexandria, where

resided her sister, now married to Lieutenant Calvert, the invalid of the first act, and here she lay sick from exhaustion and exposure for four weeks !

But she would not forego the remainder of her journey. Leaving her two oldest children with Mrs. Calvert, she set on from here by horseback. She rode with the servant on the crupper, the negress fairly holding her mistress in the saddle. For most of the way the men carried the infant. When it is considered that they traversed much rough country, including a great deal of swamp-land, and wildernesses thick with undergrowth ; that the roads were traces that were often lost in the mire ; that it was tropical mid-summer, with torrents of rain, and that the distance, by the route, was about two hundred miles after leaving the river, it will be realized what the invalid mother's hardships were. We have a still more intimate understanding of them when we read in Lamar's account that one of the men of her little party died from the effects of the trip.

Yet this does not describe any unusual instance of hardships by travel in the new countries. Aside from the circumstance of illness, the journey of Mrs. Long was common to the time, and our great-grandmothers seemed not to live the shorter lives because of them.

Jennie Long recuperated after arriving at Nacogdoches, the "capital" of the freebooters' new Texas government. She was there with her husband several weeks before he departed on his mission to Galveston. The doctor must

have suffered as much heartache at leaving her here as when he left her at Natchez, and have felt a thousand more misgivings. In sober truth, he already was apprehensive about his position. Rumors were in the simoons that swept across and withered the Texas steppes, of royalists marshalling with the watchword of death to Americano invaders! He was doubtful about his ability to hold the country against them, and he knew the warfare they would wage against him would not be like that between nations recognizing "civilized" rules. Some recruits had straggled along, but there had been no such movement to join him as he had expected. The slaveholders wanted Texas. They demanded it as a right. But most of them preferred to remain on their plantations and let others go and do the fighting for it. In the meanwhile they would courageously damn the government for "relinquishing" the province.

Well may President-General Long, of the Supreme Council, have feared for his success, to the desperate limit of seeking aid from the pirate king. Trouble was on the march for him. And it made connections with his numerous settlement-posts before he had been gone many days. The royalists first attacked Johnson, on the Brazos, and took eleven prisoners. The rest of the Americans there escaped, but were rapidly pursued to Walker's fort at La Bahia. Here they were attacked by a much superior force of three hundred Mexican regulars, and fled,

leaving their baggage and provisions, as well as many of their arms.

Things began to go awry also at the capital, where another sort of enemy disturbed his government. While Long was on the way back he received a message from his wife, sent by an express rider, informing him that Major Cooke, who had been left in principal authority, had "resumed his old habits of drunkenness" and that things were going altogether badly. Also that it was reported that the royalist troops had attacked some of the posts, and that nothing was being done under the disorganization at Nacogdoches towards preparations for repelling them.

The doctor pushed on rapidly for his headquarters, and arrived there to find the place in a panic. Stragglers began to come in. From them he learned that his brother David had been killed in a battle near the Brazos River. The story, as it subsequently was told, was unusually sorrowful. While the Americans were being close pressed, David had received a blow that felled him from his horse. He was hardly stunned, but before he could remount, one of his own men seized the horse from him, leaped into the saddle, and escaped. David was left with nothing but his sword to defend himself with, and being on foot, escape was cut off. Refusing to surrender, he was killed.

Hearing of these disasters, and that the Mexicans were

near at hand, Long packed up his personal effects and decamped from his capital with a disorganized company across the Sabine to American territory. He halted at Natchitoches and contemplated his fragments. His flimsy governmental structure had not a knuckle left in joint. The Magee remnants after the battle of the Medina had more chance of assembling themselves and winning than had these stragglers. If Long had had a manifold better cause, it would not have been to his credit to return to the venture. Mere dogged persistence against the dictates of common sense needs tremendous sentiment to render it a virtue.

The Mexicans, or royalists, arrived at Nacogdoches to find that the government they had come to annihilate had been packed off in a trunk. Therefore they divided their force, sending a part after the fleeing officials, and the larger division after the invaders at Cooshattie. Here were gathered together Major Smith, and Captains Johnson and Walker, with their "allied forces" — about seventy-five men in all. They could not do anything but fight, although they got much the worse of it. The argument occurred on the prairie near the village, as they did not care to risk being penned up to make a Mexican slaughter-day; and soon the fugitive invaders — some Texas historians indulge the fiction of calling them "republicans" — were dusting the plains homeward.

They got across the Trinity to a point called Bolivar,

on Galveston Bay, and made a stand. Within a short time they were rejoined by Long, who brought with him as many supporters as he could gather. What the valiant and warlike Colonel Bowie and the assassin Gutierrez were doing all this while of reverses cannot be dwelt upon, as the accounts are silent concerning them. Apparently neither distinguished himself by any act of heroism.

After the general arrived at Bolivar the Americans built a fort, or log barracks, making their defences pretty strong. But watching through the chinks of a log fort for the coming of the foe is not progressive conquest, and Long again left his command to solicit aid, this time going to New Orleans.

The accounts of what happened subsequently are somewhat at variance. The operations of this garrison involve a question of doubt, but it appears that Mrs. Long joined her husband here before his departure. But in any event it is certain that he went to the Southern metropolis, and that he there fell in with two Mexican exiles, stanch patriots, to be sure, both of whom were thirsting to "liberate" Texas, — or any other Spanish province that offered something. Their names were Milam and Trespalachios. The latter was the more positive character.

Taking up these Mexicans, and proclaiming Trespalachios as the head of the enterprise, the doctor solicited funds and volunteers for a second expedition, or an auxiliary to his first one. It was nominally to aid the republicans

in their struggles against Spain, but the word was given privately that the possession of Texas for a separate government, and the spoils of seizure, were what volunteers were to expect. In the proclamation this party issued upon setting off, Trespalachios styled himself "Lieutenant-General of the Mexican Army and President of the Supreme Council of Texas." Titles were the strong points of the patriot adventurers of those days — titles and commissions. Of course they could all issue commissions of any rank, — it all depended upon the size of the subscription the recipient made to the "liberation" fund. When Toledo came to New Orleans from Cuba he had a batch of such commissions in blank.

Long's party went by water along the coast to the mouth of the San Antonio River. Here it landed, and only fifty-one men composed the army of which the lieutenant-general and president was the ostensible head. They proceeded up to La Bahia, which they occupied without opposition. It appears that most of the royalist troops had been withdrawn. Whether any company from the fort at Point Bolivar joined and coöperated with Long at this time is not certain, but it seems unlikely that they did. In fact, it appears certain that the garrison which the leader left at that fortification gradually melted away and forsook the enterprise. Long did not leave New Orleans till the Spring of 1821, and it is not improbable that they became disheartened during the long interim.

It was October 4 when the second party reached La Bahia, and on August 21 preceding had occurred the treaty of Cordova which practically freed Mexico from Spanish rule and was the beginning of her independence. Colonel Perez, commanding in Texas, did not recognize the pretension that the invading Americans were actuated merely by a desire to advance republican principles, so he surrounded them, took them prisoners, and marched them to San Antonio. From this place they were soon afterward transferred to the City of Mexico.

During the long, anxious Winter of 1819-20, and the longer and more hopeless Summer that followed, the little garrison at Point Bolivar awaited the return of their leader from New Orleans. The real sustaining influence was Mrs. Long. Her confidence in her husband seems never once to have faltered. That he would succeed in raising an adequate army, which ultimately would effect the conquest of the vast Province upon whose desolate border they were trembling in fear and hunger, was the chief article of her faith. She cheered the rude men around her with this assurance, some of whom were of notorious bravado. Much like the Countess Ordelaifi, the story of whose heroic defence of the castle of Cesena against the warrior-cardinal, Carrillo, pending the coming of her husband with his army, adorns mediæval romance, the brave young wife animated this frail garrison.

Month after month wore on, and one by one the

defenders of the log fort drifted away. Occasionally came a letter from the Doctor at New Orleans. These always were of the most enthusiastic tenor. Great men were heartily espousing his cause. Such a general had pledged his coöperation, another noted politician had avowed his sympathy, another merchant had agreed to contribute supplies. But the experienced adventurers of the wasting company at Bolivar knew the great difference between such brave promises and bacon and meal in the boats. And as the seasons passed, and privations and dangers increased, they began to urge the abandonment of their position.

Perhaps Mrs. Long was unreasonable — stubborn, if one chooses to say it; but her husband had told her at their parting that he would come back to her in good time and strength; and he had never yet deceived her. What if she should go and he should come and find she had deserted her trust? Those who were alarmed at the menaces of the savages who came and destroyed their corn-patches and stole their mustangs, might retreat if they insisted, but not she!

Nevertheless, something had to be done. The second Winter was well advanced. The provisions were consumed. Northerners were of unusual severity. The wilderness roundabout had been cleared of game. There had been no message from the Doctor for months. They could rig up small coasters in which they might make their way to

New Orleans. Mrs. Long disapproved. Then the hardy buccaneers would assist her overland to Natchitoches, — anyway to escape from present dismal conditions. “Not till the Doctor returns,” she answered firmly. They told her they were going. She replied that she was not! She would die first! Then if her husband came he would find her remains and know that she at least was faithful to him to the end.

And then those valiant cavaliers did something that, if it were not vouched for, we might dispute men of any character ever would do. They deserted Mrs. Long, leaving her in the log barrack on the bleak shore of the bay with her baby, her only protection the negress who had come with her from Natchez.

“Oh, the long and cruel Winter!” Not a Winter of deep snow — not the icebound Winter of Minnehaha’s sufferings, but still one of famine, chilling winds, and the dismal howling of the wild. The larder became so empty that the two women, mistress and slave, gathered the ears of corn that had been left in the ruined field, parched the kernels, and cracked them for food. The faithful negress cut the firewood. And amid their desolation they were attacked by Indians. The Comanches came and, being denied admittance, attempted to break into the log enclosure. The women had firearms and ammunition, — the retreating conquerors had been considerate enough to leave those things to them, — and they knew how to use

them. They handled their rifles like soldiers, and Jennie fired a small cannon at the redskins.

The Comanches retreated, and fortunately did not attack again, although the young mother, clasping her baby to her breast, lived in mortal fear of being massacred. And thus she lived the Winter through, hoping from day to day to see her husband coming, and not receiving even a message, a word of love or encouragement.

It cannot be explained, this neglect of Doctor Long to notify his wife of his movements. It may be he assumed that she was no longer at the fort. Possibly his messages may have been intercepted. After his removal to Mexico, it may have been impossible to communicate with her. Whatever the reason, during her last painful vigils misfortunes multiplied, and in the Spring, when the skies cleared, and planting-time had come again — only the despairing women had nothing left for seed — a vessel arrived at the Point. They were Americans who landed, and with an eagerness that cannot be described Jennie looked among them — surely *he* had come at last !

The visitors found her emaciated and careworn, — she had aged twenty years in two. And in answer to her anxious inquiries they told her, gently as they could, that he would never come — that Doctor Long was dead !

They took her away from the forlorn scene of her suffering, and on the way to her people told the story of his death. When he and his followers arrived as prisoners

at Mexico City they entered the plea that, inasmuch as they had been operating in aid of the revolutionists of Mexico, and had assisted in establishing the independence of the nation, they were entitled to gratitude instead of punishment. Whether any gratitude was bestowed upon them or not, they were all set at liberty.

As in many of the events of Long's career, there are two accounts of subsequent happenings.

One would have us believe that he was invited to visit the capital "that he might receive appropriate honors as one of the champions of civil liberty." It is needless to say that this could not have been true. The same account inconsistently relates that, being thus gratefully regarded, he was an object of suspicion by Iturbide, the first ruler of Mexico under a "free government," who issued secret orders for his assassination. In this manner marked, he was, while calling at the house of a Mexican official, and halting at the entrance to produce his passport, shot down by a soldier from an adjoining piazza.

The other account, by reputable historians said to be the true one, gives it that after his release, early in 1822, he called at the military post of Los Gallos on some personal matter; that being denied entrance by a soldier, a dispute ensued. Being impatient of restraint, he resented the fancied indignity by striking the man, who thereupon shot him. But what difference? — James Long was dead! And Jennie Wilkinson, widowed and graying

at twenty-two, sorrowing with her children, without a home of her own, fortuneless because of their rash venture, was the greatest sufferer from the most foolhardy and disastrous of all the wild enterprises against the Mexican provinces.

## CHAPTER XIV

*The Florida Exiles — A History Story seldom Told — Seminoles and Maroons — The Horror of Fort Nichols — An Echo from the Everglades.*



**T**HIS is a narrative of a tragic motive. Whenever one declares there is a story of transgression by Americans against a friendly people so disgraceful that it has seldom been told, he needs to be sure of his authority. Yet there is such a story, and a true one. It was not a trespass

for conquest, as were the other raids herein recounted ; but it was with wickeder intent, and, unlike all the others, was instigated by a State and carried out by the Federal government.

Nevertheless, it was buccaneering, and the most flagrant outrage of all the forays into Spanish territory. It was, in fact, a series of invasions with the most atrocious disregard of national laws and of the laws of humanity. They were those invasions of Spanish Florida in pursuit of escaped bondmen. Other filibusters, at the worst, aimed at no more than to take possession of the territory entered. These sought to enslave or kill the people, and did both. There must be the ugliest page in every country's history. This is it in ours.

A natural hesitancy to recite it arises with the admonition against arousing the dormant animosities of slavery days. No doubt the accounts from which this brief is taken helped bring on the rebellion, and, some may ask, does the ghost of that slavery which the war destroyed still walk? Be that as it may, this is a tale of things worth remembering, although not flattering to our national vanity.

The Florida Exiles, or Maroons, as they were called by the Spaniards, dwelt in the wilderness of the Everglades for more than forty years, and, like the Israelites in Egypt, the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew. And it was a period of affliction compared to which (not to speak irreverently) the forty years' wandering of the children of Israel was a holiday excursion.

In early times the Carolinians had Indian as well as negro slaves. The Indian slave was much given to running

away. The negro thought his example a good one, and followed it. They escaped into Georgia, then a free colony. When Georgia introduced slavery, the Exiles, as those runaways were called, fled to Florida. Here they were recognized, both under Spanish and English rule, as free subjects, and permitted to take up public lands. By the middle of the eighteenth century there were enough of them to be a factor in the defence of the country.

Requests were made for the enforced return of these refugees, and refused by the Spanish governors of Florida. That was, perhaps, the beginning of the slavery contention which ended only at Appomattox.

Then there occurred a division of the Creek Indians inhabiting the wilds of Georgia. They had a tribal quarrel, and Seacoffee, a chief with an independent will, rebelled. Followed by a considerable number of his nation he went over into Florida and occupied vacant lands close to the Exiles. It was this rebellious part of the Creeks that became the Seminoles — the name signifying “runaways.” Thenceforward they repudiated all authority of the Creeks. They intermarried with the Exiles, and in some degree merged with those refugees.

It was not strange that this land of freedom, bordering that of slavery, became a favorite refuge for slaves escaping from Georgian masters. It seems that some of these negroes were enslaved by the Seminoles; but — a strange commentary on the superior civilization of the whites —

this was much preferred to their former situation. It was, in fact, a sort of serfdom, the serf occupying land apart from his master, working much as a free man, and giving the master a part of his produce. There was much primitive prosperity among these people. They occupied productive lands along the Apalachicola and Suwanee Rivers, kept flocks and herds, and were at peace with each other. They also remained at peace with the world until after the American Revolution.

In 1785 Georgia made a pretended treaty with the Creeks (only two villages out of one hundred being represented in the negotiations) by which the State secured a large strip of territory. In the treaty was a provision that the Creeks should return to former owners all slaves and horses that had been or would be in the future found among their people. The whites pretended to consider the Seminoles a part of the Creek Nation, and thus to hold all responsible for fugitive slaves, present and future.

After the adoption of the Constitution in 1789, the Governor of Georgia placed in the hands of commissioners appointed by the government a list of the "property" lost by Georgians subsequent to the close of the war, and demanded indemnity. The list included also one hundred and ten negroes said to have escaped during the war and to have gone among the Creeks. The following year the government made a treaty with the Creeks for a return of all prisoners *and* negroes. History has made it appear

that this meant merely the prisoners the Indians held. But the Governor of Georgia was empowered to appoint three commissioners to go among the Creeks and claim such prisoners *and* negroes as they found. No allusion whatever was made to the Seminoles or the Exiles in Florida. They had not been asked to join in the treaty.

It was a plan to bind the powerful Creeks to surrender their kinsmen, or the Exiles among them, on Spanish territory. And it was a secret proceeding. The government stipulated to pay the Creeks \$1500 a year for the service, perpetually ; also to pay Chief McGillivray \$1200 annually for life, and six other chiefs \$100 annually for life. The payments were kept up — simply donations from the national treasury for securing the return of refugee slaves.

The Seminoles of course repudiated the treaty, claiming they were an independent tribe, subject only to Spanish laws — as every American knew. Then an agent was sent to Florida to negotiate with the Spanish authorities for the return and reënslavement of the Exiles. But the Spaniards would not have it — would not recognize the claim of the Georgians to their subjects, red or black. Chafing at these defeats, the Georgians organized a force and made war on the Creeks, but to no purpose ; and during their discomfiture the government closed a treaty with Great Britian (1795) surrendering all claims against that nation for slaves carried away from the United States

in British vessels during the Revolution, or for those who enlisted in the British service. This was a sad blow, as slave-owners had counted on large indemnity.

There were other treaties with the Creeks, in which the Seminoles were not included, although the slave-holders subsequently maintained that they were still a part of the Creek Nation. They went all lengths to keep the negroes in bondage, and to capture estrays. Thus, when the Quakers, in the honesty of their faith, emancipated their slaves upon the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the slave-owners arrested the free blacks on the charge of being "fugitives from labor." The Quakers contested and obtained a decision for the blacks in the highest State courts.

Then the legislature of North Carolina passed a law empowering persons possessing landed property to seize and reënslave the emancipated negroes. The planters would not stoop to it themselves, but they got a law passed authorizing *any* person to seize, imprison, and sell the free blacks. This gave the gamblers and speculators a chance. Terrible scenes ensued. Most of the blacks were ultimately forced back into slavery. Of course, they escaped as soon as opportunity offered, having once tasted of liberty. During this time the Southern Indians were going more into the slavery business, mainly by capturing estrays; and in 1802 Congress was kind enough to the slave-holders to pass an act indemnifying them for slaves

escaping to Indians in any part of the United States. In 1811 Congress passed an act for acquiring Florida in the interest of the planters, thus to destroy the refuge of the escaped slaves, and to reënslave the Exiles.

Governor Mathews of Georgia now headed an armed expedition into Florida, ostensibly to assist in an insurrection against Spanish authority which had been worked up. The Spaniards complained to the government, and the expedition was recalled. But Mathews seemed to consider that his State was competent to declare war or make treaties, for the next year he organized an army and entered Florida with the avowed purpose of exterminating the Seminoles, who were regarded as the protectors of the Exiles. The buccaneers destroyed some settlements, but became surrounded by foes of all kinds and had to retreat. They conducted themselves as barbarians. Not being able to catch their former slaves, they robbed all in their course, including the Spaniards of their peons.

The Georgians again appealed to the government, and, not getting aid, resolved to redress their "wrongs" themselves. Their legislature passed a resolution declaring the occupation of Florida — that is, the forcible seizure of it — as "essential to the safety and welfare of our people, whether Congress authorizes it or not"; and they also passed an act to raise a force to reduce St. Augustine and punish the Indians. Under this formal declaration of war, made by a State against a nation with which the Union

was at peace, Georgia enlisted another army of spoliation, five hundred strong, consisting largely of hunters, trappers, and backwoods vagabonds. This invasion of Florida was somewhat more successful than the previous one. It destroyed several villages, and drove away herds of cattle belonging to the Exiles, whose homes and crops they had ruined. But it failed to catch either the Exiles or their defenders, the Seminoles.

The wilds and brakes were too deep and dense. The negroes and Indians could secrete themselves in the jungles and defy their persecutors. So, after a struggle lasting two years, ending May, 1813, the Georgians found themselves unable to conquer Florida. However, the Federal government had made no protest against their trying. It was, in truth, too busy with other matters, having its second war with England on hand. Great Britain took notice, nevertheless, and sent a fleet, under Lord Cochrane, into Chesapeake Bay, issued a proclamation inviting all persons (meaning slaves) who desired to emigrate from the United States to come with their families on board, and giving them the choice of entering the naval service, or of settling in freedom in any of the British West Indies.

This breach of morality by the British in tempting away the lawful property of the planters gave the latter a shock. It threatened for a while to rid them of all their human chattels. The saddest thing about it was, of course, the

interruption of the Christianizing of the said chattels; that beneficence being the first foundation-stone of the "institution." But British interference did not rest with that. Two of their sloops of war entered Apalachicola Bay, landed marines under Lieutenant Nichols, and opened communication with the Exiles. These negroes and Indians, pure and mixed, were furnished arms and ammunition, and employed by the lieutenant in building a fort for their defence, which subsequently bore the names both of Fort Nichols and of Fort Blount.

The American navy chased the British away, but the fort with its strong armament and military stores remained in possession of the Exiles. It became the centre of their habitations, and they cultivated fields for a distance of fifty miles around, along the water-courses.

Now it appears from the accounts of Mr. William Jay and Mr. J. R. Giddings, the principal authorities on this subject, that these Exiles and Seminoles were a quiet, unoffending people, cultivating the arts of peace in innocence and simplicity, and asking only to be left to their own as free Spanish subjects. It must be borne in mind, however, that both of those authors wrote with the object of making out the worst possible case against slavery and the Georgian slave-traders. That they pictured the Arcadian peace and inoffensiveness of this retreat in too happy colors can hardly be doubted. The true condition of the Exiles and their Seminole friends was that of a mild

barbarism. The escaped slaves were in a state much like that of their original existence, and of the existence of their ancestors, in Africa. Their intermarriage with the Seminoles produced a race that cannot be classed as superior to either the Indians or negroes. Education was of the most rudimentary kind. Their morals were the morals of barbarism ; their principal vice, that of white men — whiskey. And that many animals stolen from the plantations in Georgia, as well as runaway slaves, found their way to these settlements, is altogether likely. Being in such close reach of the slave-tilled plantations, they unquestionably were a source of much vexation to the Georgians, and if only their removal had been demanded when Florida came into possession of the Union, there would have been little cause for censure.

But that was not the object of the Georgians. They persistently claimed ownership of the Exiles, and of their offspring. They would not recognize that any negro had a right to exist free, nor did they ever admit that former slaves, and the children of former slaves, had any right of protection under Spanish laws on Spanish soil. Any escaped slave should be caught wherever found ; and they referred to the Exiles only as negroes and outlaws.

Peace having come to the country once more, the army along the Southern frontiers was idle. The officers were mostly Southerners who sympathized with the Georgian view of the negro. It appears strange that they should

have had no higher regard for the comity of nations than the slavers had, but it is a fact that in 1816 General Gaines, commanding in Georgia, urged upon his superiors an invasion of Spanish territory for the purpose of recapturing alleged fugitive slaves.

General Gaines wrote to this effect to General Jackson, who commanded the Southwestern military district, with headquarters at Nashville. He represented to Jackson that Fort Nichols, the one left by the British, had been erected for rapine and plunder; that it was a rendezvous for such, and that it ought to be blown up. This is the same General Gaines who, in after years, married the heiress Myra Clarke at New Orleans, and in his later life showed a much juster appreciation of the human as well as legal rights of the poor wretches against whom he now planned unholy war.

General Jackson looked only at the emergency as it was presented to him, and finally wrote Gaines as to his opinions about the fort. "And if your mind shall have formed the same conclusion," he advised, "destroy it and return the stolen negroes and property to their rightful owners." This quotation from his order shows clearly what the object of the invasion was to be — nothing more nor less than to catch fugitive slaves and destroy their stronghold, so that future escaped slaves might not find an asylum in it; and the fiction reiterated by the Georgians that the Exiles were stolen from them and held

by the Seminoles apparently was honestly believed by the General. The fort was sixty miles from the Georgia border ; and in all the official correspondence there is not a word of proof or attempt at proof that the Exiles had been stolen ; and what is much more remarkable, there is not a specific complaint of any hostile act or depredation of the Seminoles or Exiles against the Georgians.

Mr. Giddings, whose history of this outrage is full and searching, was for many years a member of Congress from Ohio, and a man of force and ability. His statements have never been refuted, nor even (except as to his sentiments and comments) seriously challenged. He says of this raid: "Perhaps no portion of our national history exhibits such disregard of international law as this unprovoked invasion of Florida. Who authorized any American official to dictate to Spanish officials as to their forts?" It was, in plain words, rank buccaneering, participated in by the United States army at the instigation of greedy slave-jobbers. War was declared by the Executive without consulting Congress, and that body uttered no word of protest.

Another remarkable thing about it was that the people of the United States were ignorant of what was done. It was represented by the press as a campaign for the punishment of predatory Indians ; and even historians, as a rule, have failed to explain the true object. It was the beginning of the Seminole wars which lasted many years and



MRS. MYRA CLARK GAINES

*The renowned heiress-litigant*



wore out the patience and resources of the government, cost millions of treasure, and thousands of lives. Yet there are voluminous histories of those campaigns that do not mention the real cause that led up to them. General Jackson cannot be held alone responsible. He had his instructions from the Secretary of War; and Commodore Patterson, who coöperated by sea, had his from the Secretary of the Navy, both in regular order. Not even did these orders recite any hostile acts as having been committed by the Exiles.

The invading force was placed under the command of Colonel Clinch. As he advanced into their country the Exiles (now mainly descendants of the original refugees, their chief crime consisting in their parents having been slaves) fled to the fort, the walls of which were eighteen feet high and twelve feet thick. In it was much valuable property. Its site had been well chosen for repelling attacks, and into it now were crowded warriors, women, and children. Three gunboats under sailing-master Loomis came up the bay to assist in the attack. Loomis and Clinch did not agree as to the methods to be pursued, the latter having very little heart for wanton destruction of lives. Like Gaines, he was in later life one of the few outspoken advocates of justice to the unfortunates now suffering at his hands. But he had his orders; and accompanying the regular troops was a company of Creeks, foes of the Seminoles, who were enlisted in the service with

the agreement that they should share in the plunder. This plunder was expected to be mainly human beings.

The attack on Fort Nichols had at first little effect. Even the heavy shot from the gunboats did not penetrate its walls ; but after some hours of firing one reached the powder magazine in which there was a large storage, and the explosion that followed was fiendish in its havoc. There were three hundred and thirty-four souls in the fort. Of these, two hundred and seventy were sent instantly to eternity ; sixty-one persons were wounded, some frightfully mangled, others slightly ; and only three escaped injury.

But this was not all, — perhaps not the worst. Many of the sixty-one wounded were delivered over to the Indian allies of the white men. It seems incredible that civilized beings, Americans, to say nothing of officers of the United States army, could ever have done such a devilish thing, but the proof is irrefutable. Among the wounded victims were some against whom the Creeks had a savage grudge, and they took the unfortunate creatures and tortured them in the presence of the American soldiers. All who were not seriously wounded were enslaved, and the others massacred !

The enslaved victims were taken to Georgia and, for the most part, delivered over to the men, gentlemen planters, who claimed to be the heirs of those who, two and three generations previously, owned, as alleged, the ancestors of

the captives ! Deliveries were made on simple claim, without proof before court or magistrate, or any other formality, no evidences of identity, or even of descent. It was a transaction of honor ! May we not pardon Congressman Giddings for showing a slight "prejudice" in his book ?

Perhaps we should be prepared for the wave of execration that must sweep the land, especially because of the employment of the United States army and navy in such inhuman business. But nobody seems to have raised a voice. It was not advertised. The people in the South approved, and those in the North knew hardly anything about it. Twenty-two years afterward a bill was introduced in Congress appropriating \$5000 to the officers and men of the navy who participated in this slave-catching campaign — a campaign marked by as hideous savagery in warfare as any in American history, between either savage or civilized races — as special compensation for their "gallant services" !

Startling to relate, the bill was favorably reported by Ingham of Connecticut, chairman of the committee on naval affairs ; no opposition was raised, and it passed. "The people of the United States paid that bonus for the perpetration of one of the darkest crimes which stains the history of any civilization." Perhaps it may lessen the wonder if one recollects that at the time it was considered very bad form to agitate in Congress any question relating to slavery, for fear of injuring somebody's sensitive feelings.

About one-third of all the Exiles in Florida perished or were reënslaved. Practically the first that the country heard about the invasion was when the subject came to be debated in Congress. The ablest members of that body, and the ablest supporters of the administration, taxed their ingenuity and brought their highest powers of rhetoric into play in vindication of those concerned in the outrage. No action was taken by Congress. It was twenty years later when the full facts were published by William Jay, of New York.

The Seminole and Exile survivors, believing they would be attacked again, prepared for war. They bought arms of the Spaniards and the English, and drilled in companies along the Georgia frontier. They were given time to raise and gather a crop, as no further motion was made against them till November, 1817. Then a Lieutenant Scott and about forty men, making a journey along the Apalachicola for the protection of American settlers, as alleged, were attacked. They had with them a number of women and children, and all were slain. Not a soldier survived. One woman only was taken prisoner.

Now *this* outrage was heralded over the whole country. The land was in a flame of indignation over the atrocity. No reference was made to the previous campaign and its slaughter. On the contrary, the President, in a proclamation, said of the Seminoles "the hostilities of this tribe were unprovoked"; and, "as almost the whole of this

tribe inhabit the country within the limits of Florida, Spain is bound by the treaty of 1795 to restrain them from committing depredations against the United States."

The army was now sent to prosecute the war. Jackson was ordered to the field, and to call out the militia of Tennessee and Georgia. Congress quickly made an appropriation, and every orator proclaimed the cause of the war as the Scott massacre. The authors cited herein assert that the record does not show one of them to have mentioned the wanton massacre of the slave-catching invasion of the year before as having anything to do with it. The initiative and blame were all laid to the simple people in the jungle who had acted in self-protection.

General Jackson marched into Florida with three thousand men — one thousand regulars and two thousand volunteers, including Creek auxiliaries. He drove the Seminoles before him to Fort St. Mark, and captured it. An American gunboat in Apalachicola Bay hoisted a British flag as a decoy, enticed two Seminole chiefs on board by the deception, and Jackson had them hanged. Valiant warfare, indeed! He also hanged two Englishmen, Arbuthnot and Armbrister, on the charge of inciting Indians to war. The facts concerning the whole wretched business were discreditable to the Americans, and consequently were misrepresented, — as, for example, the General's letter to the Spanish Governor of Pensacola in attempted justification of his bringing an American army into Spanish territory:

“Negroes who have fled from their masters, citizens of the United States have raised the tomahawk, and in the character of savage warfare have spared neither age nor sex. Helpless women have been massacred, and the cradle crimsoned with blood.”

Had the General forgotten his ordering troops against those people, when they were peaceable and unprepared for violence, for the avowed purpose of reënslaving them, and the horrible massacres his minions wrought? The time had been too short!

After burning a few villages, and in two engagements killing a lot of the best men of the Exiles, the army withdrew. The Exiles had removed their families and cattle to the jungle and could not be followed. It was a practical victory for them; and negroes escaping from Georgia continued to swell their numbers. The Georgians, more clamorous than before, now agitated for the purchase of Florida by the government. The administration had come to the conclusion that the only way to abolish the slave refuge was to buy the Territory; and negotiations were opened. In February, 1819, the transfer was made, the consideration being \$5,000,000. Under a new treaty with the Creeks the government agreed to pay \$250,000 in instalments for about 5,000,000 acres of their lands, — this being another sop to Georgia. Also the United States assumed the still urgently asserted claims of Georgia against the Creeks for payment of slaves “stolen,” not to exceed

\$250,000 ; and Georgia assigned her old claim for Exiles to the government to be held in trust for the benefit of the Creeks. This in effect made the Exiles the property of the United States.

Treaties, and the terms of treaties, are usually about as spirited and interesting reading as a grocer's price-list ; but there are a few points about this one that verge on the humorous. For instance, the government, having agreed to pay the Georgians for slaves not exceeding \$250,000, made an investigation, and could find but \$109,000 due on such claims, which was paid. That left \$141,000 of the appropriation. We must remember, this was in 1819. In 1834 the slavers put in a claim for that \$141,000 as an indemnity, — "for the loss of the offspring which the Exiles would have borne to their masters had they remained in bondage" !

But that is not the humorous part of it. The bill was approved by Congress without protest and was paid, — for children who never were born ! Yet funnier things transpired. In 1848 the Creeks were paid the \$141,000 on a claim which *they* put in for it ; and so the previous payment of it to the Georgians turned out to be purely a donation to them for being in the slave business.

Florida was now a part of the United States, the slave code of which presumed every black man a slave unless he could prove his freedom. No Exile could do this. They were now at the mercy of the slave-catcher, who had only

to prove ownership of *some* negro, and have any one seized. The government now recognized the Seminoles as a separate tribe, and exacted a stipulation that they should aid in preventing the escape of slaves ; and the Indians agreed to use all necessary vigilance in apprehending and delivering fugitives to the Indian agents, who were to compensate them. So now their old friends were, nominally at least, enemies of the Exiles. The Indian Department, through its agents, was becoming a sort of slave-catching bureau.

There were many complications. Sometimes an Indian and a white man claimed the same Exile. At another time a white dealer would seize a slave belonging to an Indian. Sometimes the cunning Indian would entice a slave to escape, and then claim him as his own. In 1835 a driver from Columbus, Georgia, one Milton, laid claim to twenty slaves of old Chief Econchattimico. Living on the Reservation with these serfs were twenty Exiles who had never known slavery. The chief had named them as his friends, and a record of it was deposited with the commissioner of Indian affairs. Milton wanted both slaves and Exiles, claiming to have bought them of a Creek. The claim was denied by the Federal Court. Then Milton sold his alleged claim to other man-stealers, who went with bloodhounds, manacles, and chains to run the blacks off. But the latter were armed by the chief for self-defence. Seeing this, and being too cowardly to attack armed

negroes, the man-thieves circulated the story that the blacks were arming to attack the whites.

Upon this the militia was marched to the Reservation. The old chief explained the cause of the arming—to prevent captivity. The militia officers told him it made trouble, and by assuring his people protection, induced them to give up their arms. Next day all the poor wretches were taken by the slavers, marched in chains to Georgia, and sold. There was no redress,—negroes had no rights. Many similar outrages occurred, and were winked at by the government agents—but such things really should not be recounted now for fear of stirring alive old animosities.

And besides, it only properly belongs to the story to tell what finally became of the Exiles, or Florida Maroons, and not go into the ensuing Seminole wars. In 1835, the government determined to transport all of the Seminoles and Exiles to the Indian Territory. This they resisted; and that brought on the second Seminole War. The Exiles now numbered about twelve hundred, besides about two hundred slaves belonging to the Indians. They retreated far inland, and Generals Scott, Jessup, Armstrong, Call, Taylor, and Worth, in turn, did their utmost to hunt them out. They had thousands of troops, but they could not find the foe. They also engaged the assistance of the Creeks, yet the war was practically a failure. Finally, the Seminoles were promised safety if

they and their "allies" would go West. Thus the government recognized the Exiles as allies of the Indians, and General Jessup, who concluded the agreement, so construed it.

But the Georgian slave-holders came forward to object. To that gentry the war had not been merely to rid Florida of savages, but rather to recapture refugee negroes for themselves; and failure in that respect they called "a sacrifice of national dignity." A number of the Exiles being caught by them, the Seminoles charged bad faith, refused to assemble for removal, and the results of the long war were annulled. Then General Taylor refused bluntly to continue the work of tracking refugees. The troops were disgusted with the service, and well they might be; for a few hundred blacks in the Everglades had maintained their liberty against the power of the government and the villanies of the slavers for decades.

Gradually they were taken in small parties, mainly through strategy, and sent to the West. The Exiles in some instances were treated as the property of the Seminoles. In other cases, they were given over to slaver claimants. The government took one lot of a hundred and sold them, then rescinded the action, called them prisoners of war, and started them Westward. More than five hundred were enslaved between 1835 and 1843, about one-half of whom were born free. The remainder were gradually absorbed in the Indian tribes.



GENERAL EDMUND P. GAINES

*Commander of the Department of the Southwest*



The hundred which the government sent West were reunited with a company of their Seminole relatives at New Orleans. Here a slave agent named Collins, acting for a Georgia dealer named Watson, appeared with an order for the Exiles approved by the government, on the claim that they belonged to the Creeks. Another slaver named Love laid claim to sixty others who had arrived at New Orleans. All these negroes and Indians were under the charge and authority of General Gaines, commanding the Western military district. Although this last claim was approved by a State court, Gaines refused to deliver the victims. Other claimants from Georgia arrived. But it was difficult to select the negroes, or half-breeds, from the Indians; and besides, the latter grew threatening and declared they would fight before submitting to a separation. At last, thirty-one negroes were picked out, and all remaining of both races were started by boat up river for Fort Gibson. Collins followed and overtook them at Vicksburg. Here he showed Lieutenant Reynolds, who had charge of the emigrants, orders for the negroes approved by the President. But Reynolds feared the resistance of the Indians, and could not comply. Collins went with him to Little Rock, where appeal was made to the Governor. That official declared there was no way to identify negroes claimed by Collins, and advised Reynolds to proceed to his destination with his charges.

Finally they arrived in the Indian Territory, and were

soon joined by the thirty-one who had been retained at New Orleans, and whom General Gaines had succeeded in keeping out of the clutches of the slavers. But they had no separate lands in the new Territory, and would not join the Creeks, their old enemies, as the government foolishly expected them to do. At length they settled on lands tendered them by the more enlightened Cherokees. But they were not to be left in peace. The Creeks were a slave-holding nation. They began to claim the Exiles as their slaves. The government, under an opinion of the attorney-general, refused to protect them. The secret of the Creeks' claims was that slave-drivers from the South came among them and offered them \$100 for each Exile they would seize and deliver.

Under this stimulus the Creeks made a raid on the Exiles, and captured several thousand dollars' worth of them. The slavers started homeward with these, gang-chained in the customary way. The Seminole agent went to a judge in Arkansas and obtained a writ of habeas corpus for the poor captives. The Exiles were brought before him, and he decided that the title of the Creeks was "legal and perfect ; and they having sold them to the possessor, his title must be good." Upon this odious decision the stolen Exiles were taken to the slave mart of New Orleans and sold at auction.

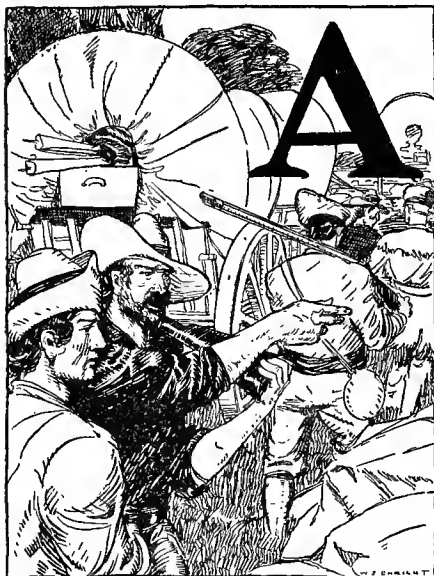
There were yet some hundreds of the Exiles in the Indian Territory. They knew that the same fate hung over

them, and that the only way to avoid it was to flee beyond the limits of the United States. They decided to emigrate to Mexico, a free country. Some three hundred made secret preparation for the long journey, and stole away in the night. The Creeks, discovering their departure, sent a war party in pursuit,—the Exiles were too profitable to let slip away. But the Creeks were defeated, and retreated, leaving their dead on the field; and the Exiles proceeded. In time, they entered Mexico and established themselves near the ancient town of Santa Rosa, where they found good lands to cultivate. It was truly their Canaan. Here they built cabins and planted gardens and fields, and, being far from the borders of a slave land, one might suppose they had at last found an asylum of safety.

Not so. Planters of Texas learned about them, and complained that runaway slaves from that State joined the Exiles. On this plea a band of Texan slave-catchers made a descent on them; but it is cheerful to read that it returned with diminished numbers, and with no captives. But not till slavery was abolished in all America could this little community of Exiles, whose struggles form a unique chapter in the history of human persecution, feel secure in its hard-won liberty.

## CHAPTER XV

*Texans Covet New Mexico—Ill-judged Expedition to Santa Fé—Mediæval Warfare—Texans all Prisoners—Predicament of an Editor.*



AN undertaking in the Southwest which created an international sensation some two-thirds of a century ago, but which has been long forgotten, was known as the Texan-Santa Fé Expedition. Although set on by the highest officials of the Republic of Texas, it properly enough belongs in

the category of American aggression in that region.

After Texas secured her independence, she laid claim to all the territory east of the Rio Grande up to its source, although the maps were not nearly unanimous as to where that was. The Mexican government never admitted it,

and maintained sovereignty over the whole of New Mexico. If there was anything among the necessities of men or nations which Texas did not require during the years following her independence, it was more land. Only a small fraction of her territory was occupied, except by savages. Indeed, she did not know how extensive her possessions were, leaving out of the problem her claim to the Rio Grande, as her northern boundaries were ill-defined.

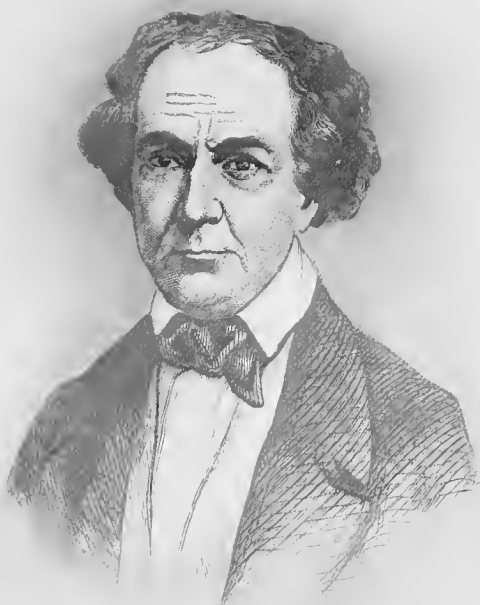
Besides this, the new republic was weak in everything — population, ready resources, and means of defence against both civilized and savage enemies. She was in debt, the revenues were inadequate, and her situation was anything but secure. Yet among the first things the Texans did was to plan for conquest. It seemed to be such a natural occupation to be clashing with Mexico that they were uneasy when not at it. So a bill was introduced in both Houses of their Congress for fitting out an expedition to be directed against New Mexico.

Congress already had too many appropriations to provide for, and did not adopt the bill. Yet most of the public officials favored the enterprise, and Mirabeau B. Lamar, then President, undertook to forward it. General Lamar had come from Mississippi, knew the history of all former buccaneering expeditions in the Southwest, and had been a prominent fighter for the Texas separation. The full scope of his scheme is doubtful. But that he placed

the expedition on a war footing is disproof of the later contention that it was intended to be entirely pacific.

It was an ill-judged and audacious project. The expedition was poorly equipped, its organization was inefficient, and its management from start to final disaster showed no ability, either military or executive. In fact, the discomfiture of the Texans is relieved from the ludicrous only by the severity of their humiliation and sufferings.

To begin with, there was trouble in financing the enterprise, which made it two months late in setting off,—a fatal error. It started from Austin, June 21, 1841, and consisted of three hundred and twenty men, of which two hundred and seventy were enlisted for arms; the remainder included three commissioners appointed by the President, scouts, servants, and several traders who went with a caravan of merchandise intended for the Santa Fé market. All were heavily armed and mounted. The soldiers were uniformed with dragoon jackets and caps. The armament included one six-pounder brass cannon. The caravan numbered twenty-four wagons, each drawn by three or four yoke of oxen. The organization was in six companies under Captains Caldwell, Sutton, Houghton, Hudson, Strain, and Lewis. The commander was General McLeod, while William G. Cooke, R. F. Brenham, and J. A. Navarro composed the President's commission to the people of New Mexico.



MIRABEAU B. LAMAR

*President of Texas*



So far as ever was admitted by the Texans, the objects of the movement were all set forth in Lamar's proclamation to the New Mexicans, many copies of which the commissioners took along for distribution. It declared that Texas considered her territory rightfully to extend to the Rio Grande, and said to the people of Santa Fé that the merchants of Texas desired to open up commerce with them; that if they, the people, desired to share the blessings of the new republic, if they were willing to submit to the laws of Texas and acknowledge her jurisdiction, arrangements would gladly be made to extend such control over them. Otherwise, friendly commercial relations only would be established. The expedition was not to attempt the subjugation of the country by violence.

That is what President Lamar's proclamation said. But there were many besides the Mexicans who believed it to be the real intention to subjugate the country; peaceably, if so it could be done, otherwise by interesting the inhabitants in trade, and then, when occasion was ripe, by a military *coup*. It was even declared by some that Lamar was aided and abetted by slavery interests, and that sovereignty over all the territory to the Pacific was their final goal. The ablest American historians have since placed that construction upon it. But whatever were the real intentions, those set out in the proclamation were a clear notification to the New Mexican officials that

the bearers of it had designs on their territory. And when it was accompanied by a heavily armed military force, those officials did not allow a few wagon-loads of merchandise to deceive them. That President Lamar or any sane Texan could have supposed that those officials or the Mexican government would, with the animosities existing between the two countries because of the late wars, submit amicably to such an attempt on their possessions, is impossible of belief. If they did, it was a striking example of human credulity.

At the setting out of the aggregation they were all (save one man) Texans. Later, when in sorry captivity, many of them claimed to be citizens or subjects of other governments, whose protection they sought. Among these there were, of course, a number of Americans — citizens of the United States. Some of them, it is fair to credit, did not understand the real objects of the adventure. The most important personality among these was George Wilkins Kendall, who, after his return, wrote a two-volume history of the expedition, from which this story is largely derived. Kendall was a Vermonter who went South and established the New Orleans *Picayune*. Feeling the need of applying a bracer to his constitution, he planned a trip through Mexico; and learning of this expedition, decided to go by way of Santa Fé, and joined it as a guest. He had a passport from the Mexican consul at New Orleans, and a letter from President Lamar stating

that he was a traveller and in no way connected with the enterprise ; a precaution which, in itself, indicates grave doubts as to the kind of reception with which they might meet.

Mr. Kendall asserts that the expedition was unique ; that no previous attempt had been made on this continent to cross one thousand miles of wilderness and mountains, including hundreds of miles of alkali desert unknown to white men, infested with savages, seared by many rivers and cañons, yet with vast stretches devoid of water. When the first wagon-train started from St. Louis for Santa Fé, every part of the route had been thoroughly traversed. But Mr. Kendall was not quite exact in the statement, as a company of American merchants at Chihuahua the previous year made an experimental journey from that city to the United States, with a train of eighty wagons. They came by El Paso and through "the cross timbers," spending five months in cutting through that fearful wilderness. Incidentally, it may be noted that on their return an American circus, full-panoplied, made the long journey with this caravan, and successfully toured the Mexican cities.

At the time of the Texan expedition there was no civilization northwest of Austin, whence it started. The idea was to follow the Brazos River northerly, penetrate the "cross timbers" to the Red River, and follow that water-course, which was supposed to run nearly east and west.

This would make the route somewhat on the line of a right angle and longer, but would keep them close to the water supply. It is astonishing that such an expedition should set off without guides who had been through the territory to be traversed, but so it did. Howland, the chief guide, had been in New Mexico, but not by that way.

They expected to reach Santa Fé in six weeks or two months. But they had been out only a few days when the wagons began to break down. It shows the carelessness of preparation when it is stated that many of them were old, and all were much too heavily loaded. It looked much as though they expected to find macadamized turn-pikes. A spy company was kept a day in advance to point the best route and find water, — and always to look out for Indians. Three days brought them into the buffalo lands, where were millions of the beasts (estimated), and they had the exciting sport of the chase, as well as the savory roasts resulting. These saved the beef cattle, a large herd of which was driven along for the subsistence of the train. No bread supplies were taken along, and that privation was severely felt by many.

When they reached the valley of the Brazos they found it like the land of Esbcol; and though the grapes may not have been quite so large, there were, besides, plums and other fruit in profusion. Every species of timber known in Texas grew there, flanked by rich prairies teeming

with elk, turkeys, and other game. There were sparkling streams of pure water alive with trout, and honey in almost every hollow tree. To make this natural paradise complete, there was no Indian "sign." However, the water of the Brazos was brackish, and the river difficult to cross because of quicksands. But beyond they found further comforts at the sites of former Indian encampments. Here were examples of Nature's farming, unassisted. Corn, melons, and pumpkins were growing and ripening from accidental seeds. Cherokee and other Indians had formerly cultivated patches on the Upper Brazos, — it was now a sort of lazy man's Elysium.

All this was changed when they struck into the "cross timbers." This was a dreary wilderness of gnarled blackjack and post-oak, with an almost impenetrable undergrowth of thorns; the stony soil was alive with poisonous reptiles, and gashed with hideous gullies. Now was experienced also the first water famine. To make headway through this desolate jungle the wagons had to be lightened. The camp officers decided to throw away their supply of dried beef, which had mostly spoiled, and to sacrifice the tents. All were thrown away or burned, those belonging to the officers as well, only the hospital tent being retained.

Fatigue parties went ahead to cut a passage through tangles and gorges. The heat was torrid. Drivers and fatigue-men were worn out, and with their raging thirst

became ugly-tempered. The cattle were worse. Some refused to work, or were unable to ; wagons were overturned, and blasphemy, which had been cultivated as an art from the set-off, developed proportionately. In fine, the command was uncontrollable, and scattered in all directions at will, seeking water and a way out of the hideous timbers. Kendall observes that on all marches where there is no water there is no discipline. Men and animals simply go wild.

A stifling day was followed by a hot but cloudy night. The sky grew black, and all hoped for torrents, but only a few drops fell to tantalize the suffering band. The storm was mainly wind and thunder ; and the thick darkness prevented a night journey which had been planned in the hope of cooler atmosphere. The third day they worked out of this nightmare of a wilderness and came to a stream which renewed their life.

Before this the lack of equipment had been further emphasized by the certainty that not enough beeves had been sent along, and a flying squadron had to be sent back for more. This added somewhat to the delay. Now, on August 10, they began to grope for the proper route, and were deceived by a Mexican in the company who said he had trapped in that quarter, knew the ground, and that they were only seventy or eighty miles away from San Miguel. No one, strange to say, knew any better, although they were in fact more than five

times that distance from the town named. But assuming that the Mexican was right, McLeod sent a deputation composed of Guide Howland and two assistants, Baker and Rosenberry, ahead to San Miguel for the purpose of securing supplies and sounding the inhabitants on the proposal of the proclamation.

The expedition could not find the Red River. It was lost in the dry grass. Their hunger was dreadful, and their thirst was maddening. The streams they found were salt and brackish. While the cattle seemed to like the water, the men could not drink it. Indians followed them, cutting off and killing several of the company. To search for water was a risk of life; not to do so seemed certain death. Many took the chance, Mr. Kendall being one.

Another danger beset them and threatened their annihilation. As Kendall and a companion were drinking at a brackish creek in a desolate valley some miles from the caravan, they were startled by a loud report. At first they supposed the command had been attacked by Indians and had turned the cannon on them. But immediately they saw a great prairie fire. It leaped down the sides of the rugged hills through the stunted cedars, the tops of which cracked with the heat like the rattle of musketry. By taking their course along ground already burnt over, they met comrades who told them that an ammunition wagon had been caught in the flames

and blown up. The explosion destroyed much personal property, and the whole caravan looked for a time to be doomed; but heroic efforts saved the rest of it.

They were now much worse off than before, yet not destitute. All their mess and culinary utensils were destroyed, as was also much clothing. Everybody was suffering, and none knew which way to turn. All movements were experimental, and invariably led to frightful gullies, blackened valleys, and impassable chasms. Bullets were carried in the mouth to allay thirst. Pieces of raw-hide similarly used were found more effective, as also were pods of mesquit trees when chewed. Coming to a mountain barrier, they were compelled to return to a stream which they had left several days before. Rations were reduced from three pounds to half that each day. The discovery of prairie-dog villages afforded them some fresh meat, although the animals were shy and hard to kill — or rather, hard to secure, as they would usually tumble down their burrows when shot. Game had vanished, and the men were all but mutinous.

The officers now held a council and determined to divide the command. Ninety-nine mounted men in command of Captains Sutton and Lewis were sent forward unencumbered with baggage, except rations for a few days, with a view of finding New Mexican settlements. These were believed to be not more than eighty or one hundred miles distant. Kendall went with this advance division, as did

also a physician, Brenham, and an engineer, Hunt. It set off August 31.

As our historian went with the advance detachment, which was destined to find earlier excitement than the other, we prefer to leave the caravan beside the brackish stream in the barrens and follow him. The ninety and nine set out through that forbidding and apparently limitless stretch of desolation called the Llano Estacado, although not one of them was aware they were entering that forbidding desert. They supposed themselves over in New Mexico on the margin of civilization.

After travelling two or three days they came to a tremendous gash in the earth. It ran through a comparatively level land, and was not seen until they were upon the brink of it. It was about eight hundred feet wide, and nearly a thousand feet deep. The sides were almost perpendicular. Nothing but workable flying-machines could have taken them over. As for going around it, one might as well have sought to go around Brazos River, — at least, so it seemed. Yet they followed it along southward, and began to discern converging animal trails which they rightly guessed led to a crossing-place. But when they arrived at the descent they were appalled by the steep and rough path that led down into the mighty gorge. Some of the horses refused the venture at first, and had to be fairly pushed onward. It was a dangerous feat, but they reached the bottom in safety, and found the trail up the

opposite side. Nearly a day was consumed in making the crossing, but they met with no fatalities.

Within a day or two they came to another cañon of about the same width and depth, and managed to cross it in the same manner. After this the cavalcade found itself in a rocky, barren country, exceedingly hard to travel over, and destitute of game. League after league through the dreary waste they saw no living creature. Their meat spoiled, and they threw much of it away. Soon they were without food. There was even short pickings for their animals. For several days the men starved. It appeared to them that they had wandered into a parched and withered world to perish.

Finally, in a desperate hour they sighted a small party of Mexicans who were returning from a trading trip to the Indians. From them they ascertained that they were only four days' travel from their main party, although they had wandered thirteen days since separating from it. They had taken wrong courses, and should have avoided the cañons. So much for ignorance. They also learned that they were only about forty miles from a Mexican sheep ranch.

Engaging two of the Mexican traders, they sent one of their own party with them back to the caravan to guide it through the mountain pass. They also sent three or four of their number whose horses were the least jaded to ride in advance to the sheep ranch and prepare dressed meat against the coming of the others the following day.

When they all got there, those ninety-eight famished men found seventeen thousand sheep at that ranch, and started in to eat them. The best they could do at the first sitting was to consume twenty. Nothing discouraged, they buckled to it again the next morning, having a divine adjunct to the mutton in a goat's milk and flour mush, called *atole con leche*. They were excellent customers of those herdsmen for two or three days. The shepherds were a primitive lot, with crooks like those in the Bible pictures. They would have been pleased if the Americans had remained with them.

But the travellers learned bad news. The shepherds said the country was in arms; that the invasion of the Texan had been heralded through all the towns; that Guide Howland and his two aids, who had been despatched ahead by General McLeod, were prisoners at Santa Fé. But then, all Mexicans were called consummate liars, and nobody believed a word of it. Certainly they were not frightened, for Captain Lewis and George Van Ness, the latter the secretary to the commissioners, were appointed to advance to San Miguel to confer with the authorities. Both spoke Spanish fluently. They were to announce the coming of a large trading-party, and for proof of it they carried copies of Lamar's proclamation inviting the people to revolt against Mexico! So sure were they of a generous welcome that three others, Kendall, Howard, and Fitzgerald, accompanied the two delegates.

Now in those days there was a Governor in New Mexico whose name was Armijo. He was a selfish, suspicious, cruel, and tyrannical man, feared by the people over whom he ruled much like an absolute monarch. When Governor Armijo heard Texas had sent an expedition against the Territory, he issued a proclamation declaring it was coming for conquest, and that the Texans would burn, kill, and enslave! The simple people believed him, — they had heard terrible things about the Texans since San Jacinto.

Unfearful of all this, the delegates' party of five pushed bravely on. At the village of Anton Chico they fared sumptuously on a menu of tortillas, boiled eggs, and *miel*, — the latter a syrup made from common cornstalks. They lodged there, and at midnight were awakened by a vagabondish fellow who told them they were to be taken prisoners by an approaching army and shot the next day. He charged them a dollar for the information, which they refused to pay, not considering that he had earned the money. The Mexican wondered, no doubt, what kind of a bill of horrors they would expect for a dollar's worth.

But others gave them warning also, and a spy from the advancing army kindly gave them information as to the road, sending them a most dangerous way. Piratical looking scouts were seen along the cliffs, yet those trusting men were unsuspecting that any real danger was near.

Beyond Gallinas the party of five was surrounded by a company of Mexicans under Colonel Salazar, a "miscreant"



GEORGE WILKINS KENDALL

*Historian of the Texas-Santa Fé Expedition*



who politely informed the delegation that it could not expect to enter the Territory armed; that he had been ordered by his superiors to demand their weapons, each piece of which he said would be labelled so there would be no trouble in identification upon their being returned. He hoped they would not object, as it was a disagreeable request for him to make of gentlemen, at the best.

None of the party liked it very well, but their explanations carried no conviction. Mr. Kendall showed his passport proving his American citizenship, also his letter from President Lamar declaring he was travelling as a guest with the expedition. Neither did these convince. All five had to give up their arms; and at last they began to suspect that they were not going to fare altogether pleasantly. Mr. Kendall clearly showed impatience; his account says that he detected "a wicked gleam in the cowardly man's eye" when, with his "myrmidons" around him, he took such a mean advantage of them.

Then Salazar demanded all of their papers and valuables. He was such a "miscreant" that he showed even a more gentle delicacy in this demand. He regretted deeply to incommode them, yet such were his orders. It really pained him to execute them. "It was hard to detect the deep treachery and atrocious designs lying under an appearance so apparently fair," sighs Mr. Kendall in bewailing such moral obliquity. Everything was taken except their money, and that, the author declares, was left to

them only because the robbers overlooked it ; which shows his growing prejudice. Their effects were tied up in neat little handkerchief bundles and also labelled.

Now came the order that pained the sensitive Colonel Salazar most of all. He really could not apologize sufficiently for it,—such disagreeable transactions between gentlemen ! Would they please line up—not too close together ? They obeyed,—nothing so very objectionable about that. Then the colonel, suddenly losing somewhat of his affability, gave an order to a captain, who brought up a file of soldiers which paraded in front and stood at arms. This file was captained by “an abandoned wretch” with the title and cognomen of Don Jesus, which shocked the goodly wayfarers by its circumstantial blasphemy. But this shock was at once relieved by another. Would the gentlemen please be blindfolded ?

They were to be shot !

It was not till now that the Americans—for purposes of the narrative the terms Americans and Texans may be used synonymously—fairly woke up to their danger. They were men of the world, of varied experience, and more than one of them was acquainted not only with the Mexican character, but with the character of the men engaged in protecting things in that Territory. Yet they, and all the leaders of the expedition, seem to have exhibited a simple-mindedness almost infantile. They walked into the web in instalments as artlessly as

any fly into the spider's parlor. Kendall was a traveller and a successful journalist; Fitzgerald had seen military service in Spain; Lewis had done business in Chihuahua, — and here they stood like a lot of dunces before a polite request to be blindfolded for execution.

Fitzgerald was the first to read the unpropitious signs. It was a moment of dramatic intensity. Captain Lewis glanced the order down the line, and Kendall says that, without a spoken word, every man felt and understood. They must seize the muskets from the file of executioners — a motley lot of weaklings — and strike for an escape. But now arose a quarrel between Salazar and a citizen who proved to be Don Gregorio Vigil, a man of wealth and influence. He objected to having men shot who came with letters and requests to see the Governor. The Americans supported Don Gregorio with warnings to Salazar of the consequences, should he murder them; and the colonel changed his mind.

Being thus reprieved, the captives were marched on foot to San Miguel in charge of the captain of blasphemous name. Salazar moved on for more prisoners. On the way the five were treated kindly at villages through which they passed. The inhabitants, especially the women, showed real compassion and supplied them with bread and cheese. The newspaper man tells it himself that now he had to throw bread away. He had become so hungry for it that at the first village he bought

enough for a month, really thinking he would eat it all ; yet he was going into a country where he could get it every day. He fed it to his horse before that good friend was taken from him. But the quantity they ate, or the change in diet, made them ill, and the walk of fifteen miles to San Miguel, together with wading cold streams, made the party wretched.

At San Miguel they were shut up in a sort of hole and fed on tortillas, which they did not relish. A kind priest sent them generous bowls of hot coffee, and that helped. All clothing except what they wore had been taken, and the chill winds made them long for blankets and coats. Besides, they had to sleep on the hard earthen floor, and suffered intensely. They begged of the alcalde for covering. He heeded not, but a poor woman who overheard brought them her blanket and buffalo robe — all she had — out of pity. Kendall bought another blanket for an English sovereign, and thus they made a bed for five.

Next morning they bought a sheep and hired it cooked. The priest sent coffee again. A woman, seeing their illness, brought them a bottle of brandy ; others, cheese and frijoles. Yet Kendall observes : “ We were now in the power of men who possess all the vices of savage life without one of the virtues that civilization teaches, — cruel, relentless, and treacherous, who looked upon us as heretics.”

Before reaching Santa Fé they met more troops, and had to submit to being tied by the wrists with a lariat. Kendall and Howard, being ill and lame, were excepted, although they were made to walk with hands folded on their breasts as a sign of submission. Kendall resents it in his book in these words: "Never shall I forget that Don Jesus! He had a coarse, dark, hang-dog face, a black but vicious eye, a head which I am phrenologist enough to know was as destitute of the organs of benevolence and the better attributes of our nature as outer darkness is of light; and if he had a heart at all, it legitimately belonged to a hyena!"

During this march the guard entertained them with descriptions of how they would be executed as soon as the Governor got them. They met about one thousand troops that day, on the way to receive the Texans. In the evening at sunset a trumpet blast announced the approach of the mighty Governor. There was a great parade of spearsmen and ragged musketeers, and then, in a breathless moment, loomed forth his dread Excellency on a sunburst mule. For an instant it were hard to say which splendor was the more dazzling, the panoply of the mule, or the august rider.

General Armijo was in truth an impressive personage, six feet high, portly, and possessed of a fine military carriage. He rode straight to the prisoners, spoke politely, shook each one by the hand, called them *amigos*, and asked

who they were. Lewis made the cowardly reply that they were merchants from the United States. Armijo grasped him by the collar of his dragoon jacket and said sternly:

“What does this mean? Do you think I cannot read? Texas!”

At the same time he pointed to the State name and the lone star on the brass buttons.

“You need not think you can deceive me!” continued Armijo, fiercely. “I can read. No merchant from the United States travels in a Texan military jacket!”

Then Armijo asked about the main body of the caravan; how many, and where they were. Van Ness, secretary to the commissioners, now answered truthfully, and asked exemption for Kendall. Armijo read the latter's passport, pronounced it good, but said he was in the company of invading enemies of New Mexico and must be held for further information. All of which may appear much more reasonable to us than it did to Mr. Kendall.

Being done with his questionings, the Governor inquired for the captive who was most fluent in Spanish,—he wanted him for an interpreter. Lewis now pressed forward again in an eager way, and as he *was* the best, he was chosen. He was untied and given a mule to ride; and that was the beginning of a most despicable treachery, for it may be stated now that Lewis turned traitor, and for his own advantage aided in condemning and robbing his comrades. Kendall says (one can excuse his intemperate

words in this case, at least): "As soon as he saw that by betraying his former associates, those who often had befriended him, he might gain life and liberty, he at once surrendered all the holy ties of religion, honor, companionship, and patriotism!"

None then suspected him, either.

Armijo then ordered the captives back to San Miguel that night. "The wretch, Don Jesus," showed his villainy by interceding for them, saying they had walked thirty miles that day and would hardly be able to return. But the Governor was inexorable, exclaiming:

"The Texans are an active people! I know them! If one of them pretends to be sick or tired, shoot him and bring me his ears! Go!"

On the road back that terrible night, Kendall hired half of a donkey, the owner riding the other and hinder half. At midnight a rainstorm and darkness the shade of tar necessitated a halt, and they slept on the earth in the downpour till morning.

When they finally arrived again at San Miguel the place was filled with troops. There were several old pieces of artillery drawn by oxen. The four captives were imprisoned, when there came to them a priest who said he was to give absolution to the one who was to be shot. This was interesting; but they soon learned the doomed man was Baker, one of the Howland deputation of three which McLeod first despatched ahead. He was led out in

the little square, blinded, placed on his knees facing the wall, and shot in the back by a detail of six soldiers. The latter were raw fellows, excited or nervous, and fired wildly. The victim writhed upon the ground till a corporal walked up with a pistol for the mercy shot, which he delivered so close that the dying man's shirt took fire and burned while he expired.

The four others were then marched out in a line near where the executed man lay. Had their last hour come also? They did not know. Left standing there, they observed themselves before an open window in the upper story of an adjoining building. At this window appeared Armijo. They saw him talking as if conversing with some one near him, but they could not see the person, nor could they hear. Still they stood in terrible suspense, and at last the Governor came out and addressed them: "Gentlemen, you told me the truth yesterday. Your companion, Howland, corroborates you. But he (Howland) tried to escape, was recaptured, and is to be shot. So you see what the penalty is for trying to escape!"

With that the unfortunate Howland was marched out. He had a wound on one side of his head and face too frightful for description, "yet he smiled at his companions with the other side." He was shot in the same manner as was his comrade.

Armijo said these things were the necessities of a war

that had been thrust upon him. The Texans could not plead entire innocence, for they had, in the candor of later judgment, undertaken a rash, unjust invasion. Yet it seems strange that at a day so recent as to be remembered by men still living, such sickening barbarism was practised under the name of "warfare" by civilized, Christian people!

Armijo was a mixture of Robespierre and Sitting Bull. The ragged and half-armed rabble around him was called "the rural militia." It had captured Howland after desperately wounding him. Rosenberry was killed. It was now sent after the ninety-four remaining of the advance corps, which was commanded by Colonel Cooke, near Anton Chico. The Governor did not go forward with his army, but made ready to fly to Mexico with his valuables if it should be beaten.

Mr. Kendall and the Texans reiterate that Armijo was a blood-stained coward; that his people secretly hated him, and were held loyal only by fear; that they longed for annexation with Texas, and that ignorance and timidity only prevented them from throwing off the Mexican "yoke." This is doubtful; and besides, it cannot in all fairness be said that the conduct of the Texans offered them any encouragement.

The advance division was surrounded by nearly a thousand troops. Salazar sent word to Cooke that if he and his men would give up their arms, the Governor would

make amicable arrangements with them. Asked about the delegation, he answered that it had been courteously received, and Señor Kendall allowed to proceed on his journey. Then Lewis, the renegade, came and said a force of four thousand troops were ready to fight. He was suspected, but pledged his masonic faith and his honor. So Cooke capitulated.

On went the Mexicans and met the caravan, or main body of the invaders. That division was induced to surrender all arms under similar representations. And now the whole warlike expedition of Texans, with the prowess of being terrible fighters, had been neatly taken in without their having fired a shot.

In the meantime the four "delegates" remained in prison. Guards kept cheering them with assurances that they would all be shot if the whole expedition did not surrender; and as they felt certain their three hundred and more comrades would fight to the last arroyo it kept them thinking even more than they otherwise would have of the scene in the square. But finally there was a great rejoicing of the populace—loud "vivas" of "Long live the Mexican republic!" "Long live brave Armijo!" "Death to the Texans!" together with bell-ringing, gun-firing, and trumpet-blasting. Besides which, *Te Deum* was sung in the church, and a grotesque puppet, an effigy of San Miguel, patron saint of the town, was paraded in feathered finery, "amidst hellish orgies and cabalistic

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sounds," as Mr. Kendall unappreciatively declared. But did it show that the people were at heart anxious for Texan sovereignty?

With the exception of chinchas, the vermin pest of all Mexican prisons, the four were not uncomfortable. The people were kind, especially the women. Girls brought them *chile guisado*, *atole*, *miel*, eggs, tortillas, and frijoles, which they were bound to eat or wound the donors' feelings, which was out of the question. It was an odd kink of fate that, whereas a short time before they had nearly died by starving, they now had to eat about a dozen meals a day, and suffered about as much from overgorging.

And now occurred the theatrical climax of the capture. The Texans arrived, caravan and men. All were worn and haggard. Would they be liberated? Some were so foolish as to suppose they would be. But only a gunsmith, a blacksmith, a musician, and the hospital steward were set free, and those only because the Governor wanted their services. The loads of merchandise were unpacked under the supervision of Armijo himself, with Lewis at his elbow. As the bales were opened the contents were divided among the warriors. The most valuable Lewis claimed, and those were set aside to be divided between him and Armijo. This was one of the rewards for his treachery. The other Texans never got a whistle.

This done, Armijo held a council of war, in the hearing of the prisoners, as to what disposition should be made of

them. Some argued loudly for the execution of the whole captive force. Others advised that they be sent to Mexico City as a trophy of New Mexican arms. The Americans took notice, — those who understood Spanish. It was an interesting debate for other reasons than the oratory. At length the officers agreed to decide the question by a vote — *viva voce*. The roll was called — it ran so close that the Texans began to count time by heart-throbs. And when the result was announced they were saved by a majority of *one*! — saved to be sent captives on a journey of two thousand miles on foot!

Was this a barbaric theatrical trick merely to frighten the trembling prisoners? *Quien sabe?* They never knew.

## CHAPTER XVI

*Captive Train Started for Mexico City — Terrors of the Journey — Strange Scenes and Experiences — Pestilence and Chains — Liberty at Last.*



**I**N spite of all disasters Kendall took daily notes. At first he was puzzled by the observation that the women nearly all had what he supposed was a birth-mark—a deep red spot on the face; but he found it was put on with fruit-juice or vermilion,—in fine, a fashion. This he deplored;

but he approved of the dress of the females—the loose chemise and skirt, with seldom a gown; sermonized on the beauty of the natural figure which it encouraged, to the rebuke “of corsets and other twisting and contorting devices.”

But this is aside from the tale of the Texans, who now were in a most helpless and sorry plight. The whole hard-luck prison gang was now started "down the road" for old Mexico. Cooke's advance division was put under way several weeks ahead of the others. Everybody was robbed. Not a man started on that terrible journey with more than a blanket, the clothes (mostly ragged) which he wore, and the money and jewelry he had managed to secrete about him. No one was allowed to ride.

Kendall complained bitterly at the fact that he was treated the same as the others, no recognition being taken of his American citizenship. There were, in fact, six others who claimed to be citizens of the United States. Many others claimed, later on, the protection of other governments — French, British, German. It was indeed a variegated organization. It contained physicians, engineers, soldiers, lawyers, mechanics of many trades, merchants, clerks, loafers, adventurers, horse-jockeys, and two or three comedy actors. They suffered hardships such as have not fallen to the lot of many men in modern days, because of their failure, for which few of them were responsible. They had been divided up accommodatingly for Armijo, whom the Texans underrated, to take in small lots, and now they could do nothing but bear their punishment.

How Kendall hated Armijo and Salazar! As a parting shot to the former he gives a brief biography of

him, beginning: "He was born of low and disreputable parents, and from his earliest childhood his habits were bad. He commenced his career by petty pilfering, which grew as he advanced in years to grand larcenies. While yet a youth he carried on a business in sheep-stealing," etc. All of which, and more that followed, was substantially true, and not spun out of the biographer's venom.

Salazar was placed in charge of the captives to El Paso. Armijo sent with the train two or three dozen beef-cattle for subsistence, but the colonel slaughtered only two of them, keeping the others to sell for his own account, but of which profits he failed to realize, as will be seen. Kendall states that he fed parties of the captives at times as a keeper feeds wolves, tossing tortillas in the air, and laughing heartily at the scramble for them by the famished men. Long starvation had robbed them of forbearance and human decency, and they would struggle roughly for the morsels.

All soon suffered severely with sore and swollen feet, which resulted from being frost-bitten at night, as well as treading the stony roads by day. Mr. Kendall had to discard his shoes, and went limping in his stockings.

Salazar told them his orders were to tie them all every night, but that his humanity forbade! However, if any were missing in the morning, all the others would forthwith be shot,—his own special brand of humanity.

There was a guard of two hundred poorly armed rural militia. They rode on either side of the long file, and might have been overpowered; but their arms were so useless that the prisoners knew they would stand no chance of fighting their way out of the country with them.

The terrors of this march through New Mexico unsteadied the pen. It was Salazar's policy to so weary the captives out during the day that they would have no life for escape at night. Some days an ear of corn was a ration. Once when complaint of extreme hunger was made to Salazar he pointed to where his horses were feeding and said, "The grazing is excellent." At other times each man got a pint of flour with which he made a dough and ate it, having no facilities for baking. A man died of exposure. The colonel had the ears cut off and preserved, as proof that he had not escaped. The corpse was thrown aside.

Salazar would beat the sick and laggard, threatening to shoot them rather than be delayed. One McAllister, who broke down, he did shoot — and preserved his ears. Before finishing the journey he shot another. A third was shot at his order by a trooper. Still another was killed by being brained with a musket. At times the guards would give the lame ones "lifts" on their mules for a consideration. For these helps the captives gave part of their clothing. Sometimes they paid in brass buttons, which the *rurales* esteemed highly.

When they came to that great westward bend in the Rio Grande — the valley of which they had followed — the road makes a cut-off across an arid plain for ninety miles, which was called Dead Man's Journey. There was no water on the stretch, and Salazar announced that the train was to make the distance without stop for food or sleep! Every man was cautioned to fill his canteen with water. They tramped all day without a halt! At night a freezing wind sprang up. They met a regiment of Mexican regulars on the way north to help repel the Texans. Still they kept on foot — it was now so cold they would have frozen had they slept. Some sank down in a stupor, begging to be left to die! The stronger found self-help in rousing and urging them on.

At daylight there was a halt of an hour for counting and bringing up stragglers. Then onward all day. On the evening of this second day the animals gave out, which forced a rest till ten o'clock. When the journey was resumed all the prisoners were so stiff and numb they were worse off than before. At the morning halt Salazar's humanity got the upper hand of him again, and he had an ox killed for their breakfast. After this banquet they slept in the sunshine till the afternoon.

After marches some of the sufferers would sink down and go to sleep supperless, too exhausted to mix a porridge. Yet as the captive train trudged along they would chat with the guards, and most of them improved

much on the journey in their Spanish. Mr. Kendall remarks, however, that profanity was always the first exchange in the languages.

At El Paso the command of Salazar ended. The captives were turned over to another guard under General Gonzalez. They were now in Mexico proper, and at once were shown humane treatment. There were at the start one hundred and eighty-one. Five had been killed; two had died. Now the train was formed in parties of six or eight and billeted around in the houses, where all were well provisioned. Kendall and the officers stayed with General Gonzalez, and were banqueted.

While they were all sipping wine together on an afternoon, Salazar came to make his accounting to the *comandante*. He was astounded at seeing the Texans so entertained. He told Gonzalez he had been ordered to deliver so many men, and all were there but five, who unfortunately had died on the way. Gonzalez, who had been informed of the ruffian's brutality, accused him sharply of having murdered them. Salazar denied it—declared he was a brave man. General Gonzalez retorted that his bravery had nothing to do with it; that he was a murderer and a thief. Where were the cattle that had been sent in his care for the subsistence of his prisoners? He must consider himself under arrest till he produced them, and no more words about it!

Gonzalez gave the weary ones three days' rest before

starting with them for the south. The poor wretches got rid of some of their rags and vermin, the kindly Mexicans assisting them — those who were unable to buy — to fresh clothes. A noble priest named Ortiz showed marked philanthropy and kindness. He had baked several hundred loaves of bread for the captives, and when they resumed their journey, sent it forward in his own wagons and by his own servants. He also gave Mr. Kendall a horse to ride to Chihuahua, three hundred miles. The journalist bears witness of the uniform kindness of the people throughout the long journey, evidenced not only in donations of food, money, and clothing, but in expressions of genuine sympathy. It is, indeed, doubtful whether at any time a force of foreign adventurers entering the United States bent on similar objects would have received the kindness and sympathy from our people as that band of Americans and Texans did from *the people* of Mexico.

General Gonzalez sent his carriage for the use of the principal officer-prisoners. Citizens provided mules for the men. The whole populace turned out to see them off. Taking advantage of such a numerous convoy, many of the business people sent their crops of fruits and wines to the Chihuahua market. Thus the prison train took on somewhat the appearance of a triumphal procession. Yet the Texans were grotesque and even brigandish in their strange and motley apparel, long hair, and unshaven faces. They

could now laugh at each other. The serio-comic stage of the performance had been reached.

The journalist noted that a half-breed Delaware Indian accompanied by a little fice of a petty Mexican officer visited their camp. The Delaware stated that he was a native of Indiana, where he had been educated ; and that his reputation for man-killing had secured him an offer from Mexican officials to come to their country and exterminate Apaches at five dollars a scalp, in which industry he was then engaged. His stories indicated enormous carnage at his hands, but as his appearance was not that of corresponding wealth, they suspected him.

Upon their entrance in Chihuahua the tops of churches, convents, and other large buildings were crowded with people eager to see the vanquished Texans. The military of the city was drawn up along the roadway, and there was great blowing of trumpets and beating of drums. It was, in fact, much like a mediæval triumph with exhibit of captives. But they were well treated, the men receiving many presents of food and clothing.

Here Mr. Kendall obtained some money from an American merchant upon drafts, which, it is curious to learn, reached New Orleans the same day he did, more than a year afterward, having been forwarded there by way of Santa Fé, the great prairie trail to St. Louis, and thence by river, a distance of nearly four thousand miles.

Down through Mexico the experiences of the prisoners

varied greatly. Their guard was changed at every State line, and their treatment depended on the disposition of the commandants. One or two of those were harsh, but as a rule they were lenient and even generous. At times they had to camp in the open and sleep on the ground in the chill mountain air, with scant rations. The next night they would be entertained by the citizens of some large town, banqueted, and amused with fandangoes and cock-fights. Usually they were locked in some sort of enclosure at night.

At Zacatecas a subscription for their benefit was taken up among the foreign residents, and over a thousand dollars raised. A similar subscription was raised at Guanajuato. At San Luis Potosi they encountered the American circus which had come overland from the States two years before, and which had continued to play to good business. But at this city an enemy more fearful even than Armijo or his "myrmidons" attacked them. It was smallpox. Six or eight were taken with it, and in the end the scourge ran through the whole train. At Guanajuato eighteen were taken to a hospital. Five died. All now were in dread and dispirited, sustained only by the hope of immediate release upon their arrival at Mexico City. Yet Editor Kendall continued to take copious notes of the country, the people, and the customs. Among the things that impressed him was the great numbers of robbers everywhere. These banditti were, he asserts, so

skilful in their business that Robert Macaire would have starved to death in competition with them. It was hinted, too, that bands of them held close relations with certain prominent citizens in honorable pursuits.

At Queretaro, one of the Texans sent a friendly corporal with a dollar to get change, and the fellow returned with sixty-four cakes of soap. Upon remonstrance, the Texan was told that that was the regular thing, the soap being legal tender as subsidiary currency. And so it was. Stamped with the name of the town and of the person authorized to manufacture it, the stuff was a lawful medium of exchange locally. Other towns were found to have soap money also,—and has not “soap” often been used to designate certain financial transactions in the United States?

On arriving at Mexico, the party was split up and distributed among different prisons and hospitals, as had the first division which reached the capital three weeks before. Some were sent to Puebla, others to the old convent prison of Santiago. At both places they were chained in gangs and put to work on the streets. Mr. Kendall was now ill with smallpox, and with a number of his friends was sent to the dread prison-hospital of San Lazaro. This was nothing less than a prison for lepers, many of whom were confined in it for life. The Americans were detained here some time after their recovery. It was ineffably dismal and repulsive. Many of the inmates were horribly

disfigured by the fatal disease, yet Mr. Kendall says there was a degree of cheerfulness among them that seemed almost uncanny. They played at checkers and gambled at monte; sang, strummed harps and mandolins, and even formed dances in which the unfortunates in all stages of affliction, even those on crutches, engaged. Yet San Lazaro never gave up its victims except at death.

A weird story of a death within its heavily grated walls is given. It occurred in the evening. Some of the Texans playing at cards were requested not to talk so loud, as a priest was administering absolution to a dying *lazarino* close by. They were but a few yards distant, separated by an iron grating. Yet, during the solemn rite a buzzing of voices continued throughout the great, half-lighted prison. Few seemed to notice the voice of the priest, or to care. But this was not the most dolorous part. At midnight the Texans were awakened by a dismal chanting, and beheld a strange procession bearing torches and winding through the black recesses of the prison. It was the funeral of the dead *lazarino*. The discordant wails and chants, the flickering of the torches, the pall and the emblems, made a scene the most dismal, mystical, and depressing imaginable. The prison in itself was described as one of the vilest, most hideous, and mind-wrecking places in the world.

There was great agitation in the United States for the release of the seven Americans, on the seven claiming the

protection of the United States. But Santa Anna, then provisional president, was slow to act. After much diplomatic correspondence and continued efforts of our minister to Mexico, they were all liberated. The Texans were detained several months longer, but all finally were set free, the amnesty being granted by Santa Anna as an act of benevolence on the celebration of his birthday.

The editor-historian never forgave the harsh treatment he had received in his unfortunate predicament. A few years later he went with another expedition of conquest to Mexico, which was different. He accompanied Taylor through the campaign of the North, and Scott from Vera Cruz to the capital. Afterward he published a set of colored illustrations showing how his former oppressors were beaten and humbled in the many engagements of the war.

The expedition of the Texans was not the last attempt to invade Spanish or Mexican territory. Under the old *régime*, when the juggernaut of slavery seemed to be demanding a right of way through the universe, the designs of conquest and annexation became a part of the grand scheme to separate the Southern States from the Union, and to erect a republic whose borders were to be circumscribed only by the salted seas. The war with Mexico, and the vast expansion of the Union which followed, was an encouragement of this design. The Southern movement

of 1861 was alike ominous to the Union and to the future integrity of Mexico ; but the crushing of the Rebellion blasted the last hope of a great independent Sovereignty. The buccaneer was succeeded by the cowboy, and the rumble of predatory warfare by the orchestration of sickles in the golden fields.



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